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ABSTRACT

This document consists of four issues of the quarterly report "Alaska's Children," which provides information on the Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project and updates on Head Start activities in Alaska. Regular features in the issues include a calendar of conferences and meetings, a status report on Alaska's children, reports from the Alaska Children's Trust, and "Collaboration Briefings," updates on the collaboration project activities. The Winter 1998 issue focuses on revising Head Start, including family and community partnerships and early childhood development and health services; the governor's state of the child address; and the Smart Start Initiative. The Spring 1998 issue contains articles on the National Head Start Association, news from the Alaska Head Start Association, and the Alaska governor's remarks at the National Head Start Conference. The Summer 1998 issue highlights the importance of early experience for brain growth and development, the effects of early comprehensive programs for children and families, and a conference schedule for "The Early Years, The Critical Years" conference. The Fall 1998 issue focuses on supporting emergent literacy in Alaska's population and a description of the goals of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association. (KB)

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Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project

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Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs • Quarterly Report • Winter 1998

ED 425 858

Alaska's Children

Revising Head Start

"What is done to children, they will do to society."

— Karl Menninger

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Since its founding in 1965, Head Start has served nearly 14 million children and their families. Head Start programs are located in all 50 states and in its U.S. territories. In Alaska, the first Head Start program was opened in 1968 in Fairbanks to provide services to children ages 0 to 3 and their families. Head Start programs are now located in 94 Alaskan communities and in 1997 served 3,177 children ages 0 to 5 and 2,864 families. Head Start has been operating for over 30 years and has proven to be one of the most successful programs for children who may be at risk due to poverty, disabilities or lack of available quality services in their communities. It continues to be one of the few social service programs that has survived through many years of both state and national legislative cycles. Despite Head Start's successful history, misconceptions about the program persist. Many people still think of Head Start as a "preschool program for poor kids to help them get ready to enter public school." They may believe that Head Start's principal goal is to provide educational activities to help children with pre-reading, writing and numerical skills. Helping to build a child's skills in these areas, however, is just one part of Head Start. If just one concept were to be associated with Head Start, perhaps the best concept is "comprehensive."

The overall goal of every Head Start program has always been "to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children from low-income families." Head Start defines social competence as "a child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life." Head Start believes that in order to achieve social competency, Head Start programs must be **comprehensive,** that is, they must consider the children's cognitive, intellectual and social development;

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The Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
For more information, contact the Alaska Head Start Office at (907) 465-4860
Project Director–Marilyn Webb; Newsletter Editor–Dorothy Douglas

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Revising Head Start, *continued*

their physical growth and development, their health and nutritional needs, and their mental and emotional health. Head Start also believes that a child cannot be separated from family and community if the goal of social competency is to be achieved. Therefore, Head Start requires every program to foster the family's role as the child's principal and life long influence - to take into consideration the family needs for training, education, health care services and other supports to help strengthen them and build their capacity to provide life-long support to their children. Head Start is also required to develop programs that are community-based. Programs must develop models of service that reflect the unique needs, cultures and capacity of the community in which they are located. A Head Start program located in a rural Alaskan village, for example, may design a program that builds on the traditions, culture, language, facilities, and resources found in that community. A Head Start program in Mountain Village, therefore, may be developed very differently than one located in mid-town Anchorage. Both Mountain Village and Anchorage would be required to meet Head Start Standards, but the methods they use will reflect the unique character of their community.

The task of requiring each Head Start Program to meet the diverse and multiple needs of each child, consider the sometimes complex needs of the family, develop programs that are community-based and meet the national goal mandated by Head Start is a big order. But, it is one that Head Start has been able to fill for many years. It has been done with the commitment of thousands of dedicated managers, teachers, staff, parents and volunteers; and through the expectations and requirements of the National Head Start Performance Standards and the Head Start Performance Measures.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

The Performance Standards have played a central role in Head Start programs since the 1970s. Development of the Performance Standards began soon after the first Head Start summer school program opened its doors. Published as Federal Regulations in the mid-70s, the Performance Standards defined the services that Head Start programs are to provide to the children and families they serve. They are the mandatory regulations which grantee and delegate Head Start agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. Over the years, a major strength of Head Start has been the Performance Standards. They are the definition of quality services that must be provided to all children and families served, the regulatory structure for program monitoring and enforcement, and the requirements for staff training and education. They include the flexibility to encourage programs to use a variety of approaches that will meet the individual needs of their children, families and communities while still meeting performance requirements of the standards.

In June 1993 a Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion was formed and given the task of evaluating Head Start. Within six months, the Committee published its report "Creating a 21st Century Head Start." The report noted the dramatic changes that had occurred in the world of Head Start families since 1965.

"Comprehensive" means children have the opportunity to be involved in a wide variety of activities.

- The needs of poor children and families are more complicated and urgent. Violence, substance abuse, homelessness, lack of education and unemployment all contribute to these complicated needs. At the same time, more of the Head Start population comes from single-parent homes, increased numbers of parents are working, and other needs, such as family literacy, are being noted.
- The landscape of community services has changed dramatically. There are new roles and capacities for serving children and families. We also have new knowledge about the kinds of services and support that are important for changing long-term outcomes for children, new knowledge about the importance of the first three years of life, and new information about the importance of comprehensive services before the age of three.

While the Advisory Committee found that Head Start has succeeded in improving the lives of children and families, it cited some areas where improvements were possible and where expansion of Head Start services would better serve the needs of children and families. Based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, a number of changes to the Head Start program were included in the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 1994. To implement these program changes, a major revision of the Head Start Program Performance Standards was issued and became effective on January 1, 1998. They are the first comprehensive revisions made to the Performance Standards in more that 20 years.

A key revision to the Performance Standards is the restructuring of the program areas. Under the original Performance Standards, program areas were structured around component-area disciplines of education, special education, health, nutrition, mental health services, social services, and parent involvement. The revised standards are structured around the following comprehensive program areas:

- Early Childhood Development and Health Services
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Program Design and Management

The new, broader program areas simplify the standards and make them less fragmented. The new program areas stress the importance of quality services and the integration of program requirements.

In addition to restructuring, the standards have been expanded to include other key provisions, including:

- Standards for infants and toddlers have been established and incorporated into the revised standards, providing a single set of standards for Head Start programs serving children from birth (including prenatal services) to five years of age.
- Establishing partnerships with parents and families to develop a Family Partnership Agreement that identifies the family's goals, strengths, needed services and support.
- Expanding Head Start services to include opportunities for parents and children to participate in programs that meet the changing needs of today's families. These services may include programs like family literacy services, welfare to work opportunities, prenatal care and support, transition programs for children moving into public school systems, etc.

To truly understand why the concept "comprehensive" applies so well to Head Start, one has only to look at the broad range of supports and services that are available to children, families and communities; and at Head Start's commitment to quality. **Immediately following this article, you will find detailed charts showing the comprehensive scope of activities that are required in the Head Start Performance Standards. The charts also illustrate standards for program design and management which are an integral part of Head Start.** None of the goals and objectives of Head Start could be achieved without a well managed program that employs qualified staff and fosters the participation of parents and community members.

Requiring programs to undertake certain activities is just one side of the Head Start picture - the other half is assessing the quality and effectiveness of those activities, and identifying opportunities for improvement. This side of the picture is promoted through the Head Start Performance Measures.

Head Start Performance Measures

A second key recommendation of the Head Start Advisory Committee was the need for Head Start to address the quality of Head Start programs. Head Start was directed by the Committee and the Head Start Reauthorization Act to design measures or methods and procedures for measuring, annually and over longer periods, the quality and effectiveness of programs operated by Head Start agencies.

The Head Start Performance Measures are not the same as the Performance Standards. They are not additional standards by a new name with which Head Start Programs must comply. Rather, they are goals to which all programs will aspire. Building on what local programs already do, they are a new way of examining what Head Start is producing and the results it is achieving at national, regional and local levels. They will provide Head Start with a way of assessing the outcomes that Head Start children and families are experiencing. **Performance Standards define program activities; Performance Measures define program results.**

The Head Start Performance Measures have been organized into five broad objectives, all of which support the overall goal of Head Start programs: children's social competence. These objectives are:

1. Enhance children's healthy growth and development.
2. Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children.
3. Provide children with educational, health and nutritional services.
4. Link children and families to needed community services.
5. Ensure well-managed programs that involve parents in decision-making.

For each of the five objectives, performance measures, performance indicators and data sources have been outlined. For example:

Objective 3: Provide children with educational, health and nutritional services

Performance Measure	Performance Indicator	Data Source
13. Head Start assures children receive medical, dental, & mental health services	The number and % of Head Start children who: receive screening and follow up treatment for: - medical services - dental services - immunizations	PIR, HSMTS 1/4 reports SAVI - self-assessment, fed/state on-site reviews

During the Head Start year, local programs will use the Performance Measures as an integral part of their self-assessment and planning process. Once every three years, each Head Start grantee is required by law to go through a formal federal/state in-depth review process. Beginning January 1, 1998 the new Performance Measures will be the basis for this program review and on-going self-assessments. A very important part of the Performance Measures process is the inclusion of parents. Parents are included in both the continual self-assessment process and the formal state/federal review of Head Start programs.

The performance measures will provide a focus for measuring Head Start's program performance and the capacity to compare its performance to the past. By generating a comprehensive picture of how well the program is producing positive outcomes, the measures will provide an assessment of Head Start's performance at the national level through national progress reports. At the local level programs will use the data to compare themselves with national or Regional profiles and use the findings for local self-improvement efforts.

The revised Performance Standards and the new Performance Measures are scheduled for implementation starting January 1, 1998. Three years of research, nationwide committee work, and evaluations from staff, teachers, parents, and community members have gone into them. Training and technical assistance networks have been developed to ease the transition from old to new. They are intended to bring, not a new glittering program, but a program that continues to refine and improve the concept of "comprehensive."

Information sources: "Head Start Bulletin," Issue No. 63, August-September 1997 First Progress Report on the Head Start Performance Measures, May 15, 1997, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau

"Bridges," California Head Start Collaboration Project, Volume 3, Number 1. California Department of Education

Head Start Program; Final Rule. 45 CFR Part 1301 et al. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children, Youth and Families

Alaska Head Start Program

Family and Community Partnerships

Family Partnerships

Upon enrollment in Head Start, staff must begin process of building partnership with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, necessary services & support. Parents must be given an opportunity to:

- develop & implement individualized Family Partnership Agreement
- interact continually with Head Start
- receive support to access services & resources necessary to achieve family goals
- receive emergency or crisis assistance
- receive continuing education & employment training & services
- receive appropriate interventions such as counseling, education on mental health issues, substance abuse, etc

Community Partnerships

Head Start programs are required to take an active role in their community by:

- sharing information among agencies to improve child/family services
- establishing a Health Services Advisory Committee which includes professionals & volunteers from within community
- establish other advisory committees as appropriate to local program & community
- sharing training & education opportunities between Head Start & community
- conducting a Community Assessment to assess resources, strengths & needs of community programs & services for children/families

Program Collaboration

Head Start State Collaboration grants are awarded to states to develop higher level of collaboration between Head Start & other state, federal & community programs. Establishing collaborative relationships to promote access to services including:

- health care providers
- mental health providers
- nutritional service providers
- disability providers
- family preservation & support
- AmeriCorps
- child protective services
- elementary schools
- other educational services
- child care providers
- other organizations & businesses
- developing MOAs with agencies regarding services for children with disabilities
- establishing & maintaining procedures & support successful transitions into & out of Head Start by establishing relationships with schools, child care, Infant Learning, other early childhood programs

Training/ Education

Opportunities for continued training & education must be provided to staff, volunteers, families for/on:

- Head Start program development, goals,
- standards
- early childhood development
- preventive health care, including medical, dental, mental, nutrition
- career development, job placement
- Head Start decision making processes
- Family & personal Wellness programs

National Head Start Association provides training opportunities through:

- National Training guidelines
- annual Head Start Association conference
- National training for staff and parents

Family/Parent Involvement

Head Start must provide opportunities for parents to:

- be involved in program policy making decisions
- have educational activities appropriate to their expressed needs
- visit & observe & participate with children participate in program as volunteers & employees
- be included in development of program's curriculum, education & child development activities
- enhance parenting skills, knowledge & understanding of child development needs
- participate in family literacy programs
- participate in staff-parent conferences -minimum of 2 per year
- receive medical, dental, nutrition & mental health education
- receive assistance in enrolling in & receiving family health care
- become active partners in their children's medical & dental health care
- have opportunity to learn principles of preventive medical/dental, health, nutrition education
- identify & discuss child & family mental health issues
- be actively involved in implementing any mental health interventions

Early Head Start Model

Early Head Start is based on four cornerstones:

- child development
- family development
- community building
- staff development

Head Start provides pregnant women & families with children from prenatal to age 3 with the full range of Head Start services. Comprehensive health, education, training, parent involvement, nutrition services are specific to age and stage of development.

Head Start staff must meet required training & education requirements for infant/toddler care.

Facilities must meet safety/health requirements for infant/toddler populations.

Pregnant women receive appropriate health/nutrition education, screenings & treatment.

- receive comprehensive information about community resources
- work together & with other community members on programs/activities
- participate in transition activities into & out of Head Start
- receive education & training in continued involvement in their children's future education
- participate in home visits

Alaska Head Start Program
FY 97

Early Childhood Development and Health Services

Health/Safety

Required Mental Health Services
- provide parent education on mental health issues
- identify family concerns about child mental health
- share staff observations with parents on behavior/mental health issues
- support parents with needed interventions
- secure service of mental health professional for timely identification & intervention in family, staff concerns for child mental health
- design & implement program for response to identified behavioral & mental health concerns to promote child/family well-being & assist in providing special help for atypical behavior & development

Physical Health
- develop program for follow-up & treatment for problems identified by health screening including health, vision, hearing, immunizations, well-child check ups, dental treatment & education, disabilities, growth & development
- establish program for on-going health screenings, follow up & treatment
- provide parent education on preventive health practices & early intervention

Education

Required Education Program must
- be developmentally & linguistically, culturally, age appropriate
- include parents in process & planning
- support each child's individual pattern of development & learning
- provide individual & small group activities indoors & outdoors
- develop Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each child based on screenings, assessments, findings
- support development of child emerging skills in
  - language
  - literacy
  - numerical
  - cognitive reasoning
  - problem solving
  - decision making
- develop a foundation for school readiness
- develop transition process for public school entry
- include child & teacher/adult directed activities

- establish & maintain procedures for emergency response, first aid, child abuse & neglect reporting, short-term illness exclusion, medication administration, safe handling of wastes, injury prevention, etc

Screenings

Required Child Screenings include
- completing of scheduled well-child checkups
- vision
- hearing
- dental
- physical growth & development
- nutrition
- immunization
- developmental for motor, language, social , cognitive, perceptual, emotional skills
- disabilities
- mental health

Screenings must be sensitive to child/family culture, language and involve child's family

Family Screenings include:
- access to health care sources
- family strength risk factors
- all children must have health screening within 90 calendar days
- developmental, sensory, behavioral screenings must take place within 45 calendar days

Disabilities

Required Services include
- screening, referral
- follow-up parent education follow-up, treatment for condition identified in screenings
- referrals to disabilities programs such as Infant Learning Program, school district
- development of service plan for special needs
- inclusion of children with disabilities in regular Head Start programs

Nutrition

Required Nutritional Services include
- nutritional screening & assessment
- develop individual nutrition program that addresses
  - child nutrition needs
  - cultural meal preferences
  - special dietary requirements
  - age appropriate dietary needs
- meals & snacks for center-based programs that provide 1/3 nutritional requirements for half-day program; 1/2 to 2/3 requirement for full day
- promote dental hygiene in conjunction with meals
- integrate meal, nutrition program in educational curriculum
- provide parent education on family nutrition

Social/Emotional

Required Program components include
- enhancing child's understanding of self as individual and member of group
- provide opportunities to help child develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, positive attitudes toward learning
- helps child develop emotional security and social relationships
- assists family in securing support and services for family well-being, such as housing, food, job training, employment, medical care, mental health services

Alaska Head Start Program

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Second Annual State of the Child Address

On November 6, 1997, Governor Tony Knowles delivered his second Annual State of the Child Address. The Address was broadcast statewide through local television stations and following the address, the Governor and members of his Children's Cabinet hosted a call-in question and answer session so Alaskans around the state could further discuss issues concerning children and families. Members of the Children's Cabinet who joined the call-in were: Shirley Holloway, Commissioner of Education; Ron Otte, Commissioner of Public Safety; and Karen Perdue, Commissioner of Health and Social Services. Following are highlights of the Governor's State of the Child Address.

...."tonight, I start with a simple premise: No matter where Alaskans make our homes, or what we do for a living, we share a common goal - safe, healthy children and strong families.

To guarantee that Alaska remains a land of enormous opportunity, not only for our children, but for our grandchildren, tonight I'm announcing three initiatives.

Quality, affordable child care is one of Governor Knowles' Smart Start Initiatives.

Our "Smart Start for Alaska's Children" initiatives . . . are investments in Alaska's children that require both money and responsibility."

First, basic health care for the children of Alaska's working families. Second, strong families through prevention programs that work. And third, intervention - swift and forceful - when our children are in peril.

I call these three initiatives "Smart Start of for Alaska's Children" - a combination of proven prevention and intervention efforts to help us accomplish our goal of safe, healthy children and strong families."

. . . "Most Alaskans are fortunate to have basic medical care. But for about 23,000 children in Alaska's average working families, it's out of reach. These are our neighbors, who work hard, obey the laws and follow the rules. They are the working Alaskans who make too much for Medicaid, but by the time the monthly bills are paid, don't have the $500 or so for their kids' health insurance."

. . . "So tonight I am announcing a plan to extend basic medical care to the children of thousands of average working Alaska families. This will help families of four making between $20,000 and $40,000 a year, by ensuring health care for their children through 18 years of age.

Taking this simple yet significant step extends basic health coverage to 11,000 Alaska children and 800 pregnant women who now live without it. Think what a difference that will make. Making sure children have basic medical care is a smart investment. The dollars we invest to help our kids grow up healthy and strong today, will save us money and heartache tomorrow."

. . "As we take this vital step to ensure more of Alaska's children grow up healthy, we also must make sure they thrive in strong families. That combination - healthy children and strong families - is the key to breaking a vicious cycle that plagues too many of Alaska's children.."

. . . "We know what works to help make families stronger and children safer:

- Making more quality child care available for working Alaska families, so their kids are safe and learning when their parents work. Today, nearly 7,300 Alaska children receive child care assistance. My proposal will extend that help to

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State of Children, *continued*

hundreds more on waiting lists.

- Investing more in Head Start, which provides comprehensive education and health services for children up to age 5. My proposal will enroll about 200 more Alaska children into this proven program.
- Expanding our very effective Healthy Families program, which provides home visits and parenting training for 400 new moms and dads in eight communities and is a proven deterrent to child abuse. My proposal will increase the Alaskans served by 55 percent.
- Reducing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and other substance abuse problems that damage Alaska's children and unfairly limit their chances for success.
- Increasing child support collections so families get the resources they're entitled to. Last year, we increased collections by $6 million to more than $77 million for Alaska's children.
- Extending home and community-based services to young Alaskans suffering from developmental disabilities, so they can remain in their communities and lead - as much as possible - self-sufficient lives. My proposal will extend these services to 64 more Alaskan families.
- And getting our children to the schoolhouse door ready and able to learn, then providing them with a solid education. That's why I'm asking the Legislature to approve mandatory standards in reading, writing and math; mandatory testing, and mandatory remedial help for students who aren't learning the basics."

. . . "Ron Otte, my Public Safety Commissioner and Alaska's top cop, says these preventative steps that give children a healthy start in life and help keep families strong - are the best deterrent to crime.

Commissioner Otte and other state law enforcement officials know that too often we must step in to protect Alaska's kids. By circumstance - not by design - we have been turning our backs on some of Alaska's children."

. . ."We must have zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect. This means we are committed to fully addressing every single report of harm to an Alaskan child. We cannot turn out backs on Alaskan's children.

Despite the best efforts of many, we're not adequately addressing every report of harm today. That's why I recently asked for a comprehensive analysis of Alaska's child protection system by judges, police, troopers, social workers, prosecutors, educators and child advocates. After months of study, their recommendations focus on three areas: more effective responses, more resources and new laws.

The most effective response is a team approach - working together to prevent and combat the abuse and neglect of our children. As a result, we're organizing regional Child Protection Teams in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Southeast and rural Alaska to identify and protect children in peril. These teams - police, prosecutors, social workers, educators and the courts - will respond quickly to each and every report of harm.

As one child advocate told me recently, 30 days - the review time for many standard court actions - is routine for adults. But to a child living in a dangerous situation, 30 days can seem - or be - a lifetime."

. . "The task force also recommends new resources. I will ask the Legislature to put more Troopers and rural Village Public Safety Officers onto Alaska's streets and boardwalks."

. . . "We must change our laws to reflect our zero tolerance policy on child abuse and neglect - so we can more quickly intervene to protect children, get them to safety and provide them a loving, permanent place to grow up.

Our "Smart Start for Alaska's Children" initiatives - basic health care for working Alaska families, strong families through prevention programs that work, and intervention - swift and forceful when our children are in peril - are investments in Alaska's children that re-

Calendar of Events

January 16 statewide	*Alaska Head Start Association Board Conference call*	Sharon Trish 543-3401
February 23-25 Juneau	*Alaska Head Start Association Board Meeting*	Sharon Trish 543-3401
February 24 Juneau	*Alaska Head Start Association Committee meetings (via conference call to all members not attending Juneau meetings.*	
March 5	*State Board of Education Spring Meeting*	
March 25-28	*Children's Defense Fund 25 Year Celebration*	
April 22-24 Seattle, WA	*National Head Start Conference*	
April 27-29 Anchorage	*1998 Alaska Children's Mental Health Conference*	Colleen Brady-Dragomir 277-6677
June 4-6 Anchorage	*Alaska Head Start Association Board Meeting*	Sharon Trish 543-3401
June 5 Anchorage	*Alaska Head Start Association Committee meetings (via conference call to all members not attending Anchorage meetings*	Sharon Trish
June 22-26 Washington, D.C.	*Collaboration Network Meeting*	
September 23-25 Sheraton Hotel Anchorage, AK	*Early Year/Critical Years Symposium*	Bill Mailer DCRA 269-4670

quire both money and responsibility."

. . "We have unique opportunity to pay for these children's initiatives without increasing our current state budget. Because of bipartisan work in Alaska and Washington, D.C., the federal government is now paying a bigger share of Medicaid expenses in our state - about $31 million a year.

The Smart Start investment in Alaska's families I'm proposing tonight uses that $31 million, plus one million in new dollars from the increased state tax on snuff and chewing tobacco. Here's how that $32 million will be used:

- $7 million for our children's health initiative
- $11 million for prevention. That's child care, Head Start, immunizations, the Healthy Families home-visit program, substance abuse and other programs that will help us break the cycle of abuse and neglect.
- $14 million for the "zero tolerance" child protection teams and services - Troopers, VPSO's, social workers, prosecutors and child protection attorneys, parole and probation officers, better and quicker foster care and adoption.

These state funds will bring Alaska at least 18 million additional federal dollars.

In offering my proposal, I recognize there is a choice. There are those who will say we have a $32 million annual windfall that should just be pocketed as part of closing the fiscal gap. But to do that I believe we would be turning our backs on Alaska's children.

As the number of Alaska's kids without adequate health care continues to grow, as we watch reports of harm and neglect go unanswered, as we see children as wards of the government - with no home or parent - we already know the inevitable result. Teen-age suicides, juveniles in jail at an annual cost of $60,000, a never-ending cycle. That cost is vastly higher in the long term than whatever money some want to pocket today.

With the proposal I have outlined tonight, I see a future of change where all of Alaska's children have adequate health care. Where families have the chance to grow strong and prosperous. Where Alaskans have zero tolerance for the neglect and abuse of our children.

I see Alaskans today giving a Smart Start to Alaska's children. Thank You."

For more information or a complete copy of the Governor's State of the Child Address, contact the Office of the Governor at: Anchorage - 269-7450; Juneau - 465-3500; Fairbanks - 451-2920.

STATUS REPORT

Alaska's Children

School Nutrition Programs

Of the 46,967 Alaska Children who received school lunches in FY 1996:

- 22,099 children received free school lunches through the Federal National School Lunch Program
- 4,898 children received reduced-price school lunches
- 9,969 children received full-priced lunches
- Free or reduced-priced school lunches are available to children whose families meet federal low-income or poverty level income standards.

In Alaska:

- Every 5 days a baby died during the first year of life
- Every 28 days a child or youth committed suicide
- Every 52 days a child or youth was murdered
- Every 17 days a child or youth was killed by a gun
- Every day a baby was born to a mother who received late or no prenatal care
- Every 15 hours a baby was born at low birthweight
- Every 7 hours a baby was born to a teenage mother
- Every 3 hours a baby was born to an unmarried mother
- Every 52 minutes a child was reported abused or neglected

source: Children in the States, 1997. Children's Defense Fund

From 1991 through 1994, 345 Alaskan children and teenagers died from unintentional and intentional injury. Of those children and teenagers:

- 73 died as a result of suicide
- 68 died in motor vehicle accidents
- 38 died as a result of homicide
- 37 drown
- 32 died in fires.

source: Serious and Fatal Child and Adolescent Injuries in Alaska 1991- 1994 State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health.

Homeless in Alaska

In December, 1997 a one-day survey of homeless service providers showed that there were:

- 1038 total homeless cases
- 178 total homeless families
- 676 homeless people were male
- 362 homeless people were female
- 104 were homeless males 16 years of age and younger
- 82 were homeless females 16 years of age and younger
- 239 were homeless victims of domestic violence
- 81 were homeless developmentally disabled
- 132 were homeless physically disabled

These figures represent a survey of a one-day count of the homeless sheltered or intercepted while requesting services from the providers surveyed. They do not represent the total homeless population of the State of Alaska.

source: Homeless Service Providers Survey Alaska Housing Finance Corporation December, 1997. check web site: http://www.ahfc.state.ak.us for complete survey results This study was obtained through a "Study of Alaska's Homeless, Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School social studies project. Project group members: Evan Scandling, Alex Sadight, oseph Ayers.

More about "Smart Start for Alaska's Children."

During the two months since the Governor's announcement of the Smart Start initative, questions have been raised about the specifics of the proposal. Additionally, because the Alaska Legislature must agree to appropriate the funds for Smart Start, debate has already begun on the necessity of increasing state spending versus the majority's commitment to continue reduction of the state's annual budget. Legislation which would eliminate the new tobacco tax on some products has also been filed prior to the beginning of the 1997 Legislative session which, if passed, could affect the money Smart Start anticipates using to fund prevention efforts.

Following is a more detailed breakdown of proposals under the Smart Start initiatives.

■ **Smart Start for Alaska's Children - total investment = $32.2 million:**

■ **Children's Health Care - total investment = $7.2 million**

- Expands health care coverage to 11,000 children and 980 pregnant women in Alaska's working families. For example, children and pregnant women in a family of four earning $20,000 to $40,000 a year would receive health care coverage

■ **Prevention Programs - total investment = $11 million**

- Provides child care subsidies to 1,000 more children
- Expands Head Start to serve 200 additional children
- Improves child care and preschool licensing programs
- Expands the Infant Learning Program to serve 100 more infants
- Provides Infant Respite Care to 40 more families a year
- Expands Healthy Families and similar home visiting programs to approximately 800 more families
- Increases community involvement through the existing COMPASS program
- Increases Alaska Legal Services work for families in crisis
- Expands the anti-smoking marketing initiative
- Increases unwed pregnancy prevention
- Uses savings from closing Harborview for priority developmental disability services for 100 beneficiaries
- Increases Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention efforts
- Improves child immunization rates Provides clinics for diagnosis and treatment of birth defects
- Increases services to developmentally disabled and mentally ill youth

■ **Child Protection - total investment = $14 million**

- Organizes Child Protection Teams to achieve zero tolerance of child abuse and neglect
- Expands resources for troopers, VPSO's, social workers, probation and parole officers and child protection attorneys
- Increases foster care placements to meet 4.5% growth demand and subsidized adoptions for 13% growth demand; increases payments to families providing care
- Strengthens alcohol treatment services for women and children
- Provides respite care for foster parents
- Increases mental health services for children
- Increases capacity at Youth Centers in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Bethel, and Nome to relieve 20-30% overcrowding
- Expands electronic monitoring for juvenile offenders
- Provides treatment services for incarcerated youth
- Funds the Youth Corps program's new federal match program.

Taken as a whole the Smart Start Initiative seems like a big ticket item - 32 million dollars is a lot of money. To truly evaluate the worth of Smart Start, however, it is necessary to break down the big picture and take a closer look at how the funds would benefit each individual child and family served by Smart Start. For example, a low-income working family who does not have health care coverage will delay seeking medical care until their child's health problems reach a crisis stage. Children without health insurance are more likely to: have chronic health problems like ear infections, which if left untreated, can mean hearing loss and language delays. Uninsured children are more likely to have higher costs associated with their care and treatment, have higher rates of accidents and injury, miss more days of school, and have lower academic performance due to illness. Under the Smart Start Initiative a child, in fact 11,000 Alaskan children, would have the opportunity to seek prompt, consistent health care for illness as well as preventative health care such as immunizations and well-child check-ups to detect problems early.

The Smart Start Initiative proposes to invest $11 million in prevention programs. These funds would be invested in existing state programs and services that have proven to be successful and provide long-term benefits to children and families. No funds would be invested in creating new programs with new administrative costs and structures. Funds would be allocated among a number of different prevention programs to expand services to currently unserved but eligible children. For example under the Smart Start Initiative, Head Start would receive $1 million out of the total $11 million prevention dollars. With these funds Head Start would be able to:

- provide comprehensive Head Start services to an additional 200 eligible children and their families (approximately 150 families)
- comprehensive services to these children would include:
  - screening and assessments for health, nutrition, physical, vision, hearing, dental, mental, disabilities, immunizations, social and educational development
  - follow-up and treatment as required from screenings
  - developmentally, culturally and age appropriate educational programs and services
  - group and individual learning experiences designed to foster the child's social competence, emotional health and school readiness
  - comprehensive services for Head Start families would include:
  - training and education for families in nutrition, child development parenting, health, job skills, family self-sufficiency
  - job training, employment opportunities
  - assistance with transition into public schools
  - training and education in decision making, parent involvement and goal setting, community involvement through involvement in Head Start Parent Policy committees and decision making structures

- hands on experience and training in child development, supporting educational and learning skills in the home
- development of family wellness plans to assess family risk and protective factors
- training, education and referrals to supports and services to reduce family stress and risk factors

- Community opportunities would include:
  - approximately 25 new job opportunities for Head Start staff in rural communities where employment opportunities are limited
  - training, educational and career development opportunities for staff
  - additional job sites for Head Start parents and community members enrolled in "welfare to work" programs
  - for every $1.00 invested in a child, the community will save $4.75 in future costs of special education, public assistance, crime

The Smart Start Initiative will mean a great deal to each of the 200 children and their families who would, otherwise, not be able to enroll in Head Start. Considering the worth of Smart Start means considering each of these 200 children as well as the other children and families who will benefit as the prevention dollars are parceled out. Each of these prevention programs were chosen for their maximum benefit for children and families and their ability to serve the diverse needs of all Alaskan communities. Additional information about each of these prevention programs and how the Smart Start funds will be invested is available from the Children's Cabinet. Contact Shari Paul, Special Assistant for the Children's Cabinet at 465-4870. Information regarding legislative approvals and budget action regarding Smart Start can be obtained from your local elected representative or senator.

Head Start Update

Alaska Head Start Association

A new year has begun for Alaska Head Start Association membership. Actually, it began November 1. The Association would like to urge all former members to renew their membership in the Association; and to invite anyone who is interested in supporting Head Start programs to join. You do not have to be enrolled in, or employed by, Head Start to join the Association. In fact, one of the unique and important things about Head Start is the involvement of community members and volunteers. Community involvement in Head Start means that programs respond to community needs and are designed to benefit the communities they serve. That is why the Association has always had a "Friends" membership category. Enrollment fees are only $5.00 for the membership year (November through October). Fees are used to support Association planning and program coordination efforts through teleconferences, quarterly meetings, and information exchanges. In our large, diverse state, the Association provides an opportunity for Head Start programs from Ketchikan to Nome to receive support, training and education from each other. Join the Association now by contacting your local Head Start program or the Alaska Head Start Association, Attention Sarah Kuenzli, 122 First, Suite 600, Fairbanks, AK. 99701.

Children Get a Head Start on Reading

A partnership between Chugiak Children's Services Head Start Programs, AmeriCorps, the RIF (Reading is Fundamental) program and Visa USA, Inc., is bringing a lot of books into Head Start programs - 250 to be precise. Jeanine Delano, a second year AmeriCorps member is helping to build life-long literacy skills for children by reading books with Head Start children. Her goal is to read 250 stories to the children from November 1 through December 31. Four days each week, children have a chance to snuggle up with Jeanine, or another reading volunteer, and a good book. When children finish their mid-morning snack and brush their teeth, they are eager to move on to this special activity, reading. The simple task of reading to a child is one of the most important steps adults can take to help children become competent readers.

According to the national RIF program, more than 40 percent of the nation's fourth graders can't read at the basic level for their grade, and only half of young children are routinely read to by their parents. To combat literacy problems, RIF has developed the "Read Me a Story" program. This program is being supported through a $1 million minimum contribution from VISA. Funds from this program have provided a modest living allowance, health coverage and a small education award to Delano to coordinate the RIF program at the Chugiak Children's Services Head Start programs in Palmer, Wasilla and Big Lake-Houston.

— adapted from *The Frontiersman* news article, Friday, November 28, 1997

Steven's Village Fish Camp

With the passing of the Winter Solstice in December, we began our climb back to the long, warm days of summer. While there are many winter activities Head Start children enjoy, they do look forward to activities like the one sponsored by the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) Head Start program last summer. Through the efforts of Michelle Amundson, education/disabilities coordinator for FNA and Steven's Village Fish Camp; 20 Head Start children, staff and 12 parents traveled 130 miles on the Dalton Highway to the Yukon Bridge. From there, they traveled another 6 miles up river in a Yukon River tour boat to the Steven's Village Fish Camp. Activities at the camp included fishing, root digging, telling stories, hiking to a beaver pond and sharing traditional dancing and singing around the campfire. As Brenda Krupa, Head Start Director, noted, "The Yukon River shared its beauty and peace with us, which we will always remember as a time for fun and togetherness."

— *adapted from Fairbanks Native Association*

Touch Them With Tenderness

Over the past twenty years, evidence about the dangers of shaking a baby has been mounting. One of the most tragic facts surrounding the serious injury, or death of a shaken baby, is that the person who inflicted the injury did not realize that shaking can be very harmful. According to a nationwide study by Dr. Jacy Showers of the Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Plus Program, 37 percent of parents and caregivers are unaware that shaking a baby is dangerous.

Thousands of children between the ages of birth and five years old, suffer brain injury or die from being violently shaken. The shaking can cause a "whiplash" effect, and a child's undeveloped neck muscles cannot control its head movement. The rapid movement of the head can result in bruising of the brain as it bangs against the inside of the skull. There may be consequent bleeding behind the eyes, and in and around the brain. The result of this may be blindness, seizures, paralysis, a variety of developmental disabilities, or death.

Most people think that injury and death from shaking a baby occurs only if violent shaking happens. However, recent research shows that less violent shaking and even activities like transporting an infant in a bike carrier seat can cause problems that may show up later. Young children may be put at risk for injury when they are in bike carrier seats, or backpacks while their parents are skiing or engaging in other activities. If the carrier does not provide adequate support for the infant's head and neck, there is a possibility of injury especially in case of an accident or sudden stop.

Many ski areas are addressing this issue with posted information about Shaken Baby Syndrome, and requiring parents to sign a waiver if the child is to be carried in a backpack.

Common presenting complaints or indications of Shaken Baby Syndrome may include:

- Extreme irritability
- Decreased appetite or feeding problems
- Poor sucking or swallowing
- Vomiting
- Lethargy/poor muscle tone
- Inability to follow movements
- no smiling or vocalization
- Rigidity
- Seizures
- Difficulty breathing
- Comatose

Long term consequences of Shaken Baby Syndrome may include:

- Partial or total blindness
- Mental retardation
- Developmental delays
- Seizures
- Paralysis

Children's Cabinet News

Alaska Children's Trust Grants

On February 5, the Alaska Children's Trust will issue a Request for Proposals for grants from the Alaska Children's Trust. This is the second year that interest income from the Trust account will be made available, subject to legislative approval, to fund projects dealing with the prevention of child abuse and neglect, family violence and juvenile crime. Applicants who are eligible to apply for grant funds include: private nonprofit organizations, Indian Reorganization Act and traditional councils, city or borough governments, unified municipalities, school districts, regional Native health corporations, institutions of higher education, other political subdivisions of the state, or a combination of these entities. Grant proposals must address issues of abuse, neglect, violence or juvenile crime at the primary or secondary level; that is the principal aim should be to prevent problems from occurring, rather than to provide services after problems have already occurred. Proposals that provide tertiary services, that is services or programs that are aimed at treating problems after that have already occurred, are not eligible for funding. For example, a proposal that provides counseling services or treatment for parents who are under court order to receive counseling for family violence would not be considered for funding. Funding for individual projects may not exceed $50,000. The Trust anticipates funding grants from $5,000 to $50,000, with the average grant award to be approximately $20,000. Timelines for the FY 99 grant year are:

- February 5 - distribution of the Request for Proposals
- April 30 - grant applications due
- June 13 - grant awards announced.

For more information about the Children's Trust Fund Grants, or to receive an RFP, please contact Shari Paul, Children's Trust at 465-4870.

A Gift to Benefit the Alaska Children's Trust Fund

During the last year, the Alaska Children's Trust Board of Trustees has undertaken a number of different fundraising activities. One of the goals of the Board is to continue building the principal of the Trust Fund so that more interest income will be available to fund projects to prevent child abuse and neglect and family violence.

One of the Trust's fundraising projects is a book, *Little Bear's Alaska Reader* - a children's ABC book. The Trust is asking a $10.00 contribution for the book and all of the proceeds for the book go directly into the Children's Trust Fund. The Trust is also looking for organizations, or businesses that would be willing to help sell copies of the book at conferences or at their place of business. Please contact Shari Paul at 1-800-643- KIDS - buy a book and help a child.

- Cerebral palsy
- Hearing loss
- Speech difficulties
- Learning difficulties

As we learn more about brain development during these early years, there is a great need to be aware of the potential of injury and damage during this critical time. There are programs which help parents cope with the frustrations of parenting infants and young children, so that those frustrations do not lead to anger and shaking the child. Caring for an infant is not always an easy task. The National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-422-4453) is available for those who need help. There is also information available about starting local prevention programs. Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Plus (1-800-858-5222) will provide information on implementing these programs in local youth organizations, in schools, Head Start, child care and other children's programs.

Please remember to handle all infants and young children with care. "Touch them with love . . and they will love in return." NEVER NEVER SHAKE A BABY

—from Fran Rhom, Alaska Head Start Program

COLLABORATION B•R•I•E•F•I•N•G•S

Head Start Teams Up with the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program

Last fall, the Alaska Head Start Program and the Division of Public Assistance, Alaska Department of Head and Social Services began exploring the benefits of collaboration and cost sharing between Head Start and the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP). ATAP is the state's program that provides temporary financial assistance, job training and other benefits to families who are moving from "welfare to work." Both programs have common goals and program requirements. For example Head Start and ATAP both have long term goals of expanding training and employment opportunities for low income families, particularly in rural Alaska. In some small communities and villages, Head Start is one of the few programs that provides stable training, education and employment opportunities. Statewide, 274 former Head Start parents are now employed by Head Start. Over the years, many Head Start parents have begun their careers in child care and early childhood education as volunteers in Head Start programs, taken advantage of training and education programs, and gone on to complete their training through the University system. Additionally Head Start provides low-income families with necessary preventive health services, enhanced parenting skills, family self-sufficiency planning and support, and quality care and education for young children. All of these Head Start program components are also program requirements for the state's ATAP program.

These common program goals have led Head Start and ATAP to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This collaboration between the programs will:

- coordinate family self-sufficiency planning
- provide opportunities in Head Start for ATAP parents to meet their self-sufficiency plan work requirements including the Community Work Service activity
- enhance quality vocational and higher education training programs for Head Start staff
- use state and regional Head Start conferences and training programs as forums for training and education for Head Start families participating in ATAP.
- provide job readiness training, parenting classes and life skill building for low income families
- assist ATAP participants employed or volunteering with Head Start to assure job readiness, retention and career advancement
- provide referral for family planning consultation
- coordinate with local, state, and regional agencies and groups to address child care and early education needs of low income families;
- promote quality child care programs through meetings, joint training and joint placement of children.
- provide cost-sharing opportunities to stretch limited funding for both programs
- provide opportunities to address the major barrier for ATAP recipients , that of quality, affordable and available child care.

For more information about the MOU between Head Start, contact Marilyn Webb, Alaska Head Start Program at 465-4860.

Alaska Head Start Collaboration Grant

In October 1997, the State of Alaska was awarded a second Head Start State Collaboration Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant is to create partnerships between Head Start and programs that provide services and support to children and families throughout the state. During the first five-year grant period, significant partnerships and programs were developed between Head Start, the Alaska Head Start Association, state and federal agencies, private and non-profit organizations, communities, schools, and businesses. The second five-year grant will allow the state to strengthen these partnerships and to develop new initiatives to benefit Alaska's children and families.

Children's Inventory Project

One of the first new initiatives that the grant will support is the Inventory Project. In late October, the Alaska Children's Cabinet directed representatives from each of the state departments that provide services to children and families to begin a process that would improve planning and delivery of services to Alaska's children and families. Using funding support, expertise and other resources available through the Collaboration grant, the project is well under way.

The intent of the project is to improve planning and delivery of services to Alaska's children and families. The Project will:

- collect information on state programs, services, projects, grants, commissions, boards and committees that provide

Please turn to back page

Alaska's Children

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project
Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs
P.O. Box 112100
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2100

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Juneau AK

Briefings, *continued*

services, support and direction for Alaska's children and their families
- compile the information in a useable database that can be integrated with other state databases, budget and program planning procedures, etc.
- provide information and direction to state and other program managers to help identify gaps in services, coordination mechanisms, collaboration opportunities, funding and other resources, program planning opportunities, accountability and reporting requirements, and standards/guidelines/training/evaluation requirements that improve services.

The Project will build on the Resource Guide of State Programs and Services that was developed and distributed during the first five years of the grant. To date, project accomplishments include:
- forming a project working group
- developing of a statement of purpose
- compiling a working list of services and programs that meet the project criteria
- developing a survey instrument to collect information for those services and programs
- developing preliminary database needs to compile the information
- assigning project responsibilities to working group members

Target completion date for surveys of programs and services is February 15. For more information about the project, contact Marilyn Webb at 465-4861.

Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs • Quarterly Report • Spring 1998

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Alaska's Children

A 25 Year Legacy from The National Head Start Association

Children and Families First

In 1965, Head Start began quietly as a summer school program for low income children. From its simple beginnings, Head Start quickly spread across the nation as programs were established in every state. Much of the credit for creating Head Start belongs to President Lyndon Johnson. As part of his "War on Poverty" program, Johnson directed that a preschool program for children living in poverty be developed to help get them ready for public school. The first proposal developed by his staff and a team of early childhood advocates, was a demonstration project to serve about 1,000 children. His staff, however, understood a small demonstration project would never satisfy Johnson, who was after all from Texas, and used to thinking big. They also realized small demonstration projects have a history of starting small, staying small, and becoming burdened with so much research, they usually end up as another two volume report in some government office. So the preschool poverty program presented to Johnson was big enough to satisfy his Texas appetite. By the end of the Johnson Administration, Head Start was serving thousands of children and families across the nation. Since 1965, over 160 million children and their families have been touched by Head Start programs.

But the survival and success of Head Start has not come easy. Head Start has not flour-

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OOPS. In the Winter 1998, Newsletter we made an irritating mistake and duplicated pages 5 and 6. In this issue you will find an extra page entitled "Alaska Head Start Program, Program Design and Management." Please excuse our error and kindly glue this page on top of page 5.

The Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
For more information, contact the Alaska Head Start Office at (907) 465-4860.
Project Director–Marilyn Webb; Newsletter Editor–Dorothy Douglas

Legacy, *continued*

ished solely because of its comprehensive child health, social services and education programs; the parent involvement, education and training component; the staff development and training program; or even it's strong community-based philosophy - which in itself should be enough. The continued success has also depended on literally thousands and thousands of individuals who have been determined that Head Start will survive, expand, and improve the quality of its services for children and families. It is this determination that sparked the founding of the National Head Start Association and the individual state Head Start Associations.

The Legacy Begins

Like the Head Start program itself, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) began quietly and spread quickly across the nation. The idea for a Head Start association began in 1973 at the annual conference of the National Community Action Executive Director's Association in Kansas City, Missouri. During that conference, concerns regarding the future of Head Start were raised. With the change from the Johnson to the Nixon Administration, political support for Head Start was not as strong. The Nixon Administration had introduced a proposal to eliminate community action programs, which at that time, sponsored most of the Head Start programs in the states. A small group of Head Start program directors met to discuss the need to form a private national association that could advocate specifically for the Head Start Community. During the rest of the year, meetings were held with other directors, leading to the formation of the National Directors Association. Their first annual meeting was held in Chicago in 1974. At the Chicago meeting, the directors resolved to expand their advocacy efforts and to increase the scope of the association. That year, at the request of the directors, a Head Start Parents Association was formed and joined forces with the directors. In 1975, the directors and parents invited all Head Start staff and a third affiliate organization was formed. In 1976, Head Start advocates who did not easily fit into the three newly formed groups formed the "Friends" Association. The four affiliates came together for the first time in 1976, holding the first Head Start Annual Meeting and National Convention in New Orleans. Within three short years, a coalition had been formed that reflected the unique partnership that is the foundation of Head Start. A partnership of staff, parents, and community members. By 1990, the growth of the organization led to the opening of a National Office and to the resolution to merge the four affiliate groups into one centralized association.

Since its quiet beginning, NHSA has changed from simply defending Head Start in Congress to actively expanding and improving the program activities. The broad range of services include: legislative and regulatory analysis, research and policy analysis, public relations, information dissemination and publications, training and conference management, product development and collaboration with other related organizations.

Tanana Chiefs Head Start representatives at the NHSA Conference.

A Legacy of Survival

Soon after its organization, NHSA was quickly thrust into the role of supporting Head Start expansion, improving program activities and defending Head Start in Congress. The following brief legislative history of Head Start demonstrates the critical role NHSA played in Head Start's legacy.

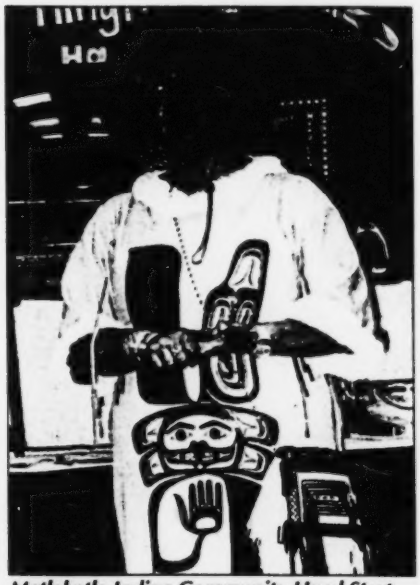
The Carter Administration - 1976 to 1980. NHSA parents and friends send thousands of letters from every state, efforts that contributed to Head Start's biggest budget increase in 10 years - $190 million. The President proposes to include Head Start in the new Department of Education. NHSA, along with a busload of advocates from Connecticut met with key officials. The congressional committee reviewing the proposal recommend that Head Start remain in the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, where it belongs. In 1979, Head Start is reauthorized for five years with funding increases each year in the number of children and families served. An increase of $125 million is allocated for FY 1982.

The Reagan Administration - 1980 to 1988. A block grant proposal is introduced in 1981 that will cut the program budget by $130 million. Program changes to Head Start are proposed that include: relaxing child/teacher ratios, converting Parent/Child centers for infants and toddlers to regular Head Start programs, withdrawing support for the Child Development Associate program, reducing transportation costs, research, demonstration and evaluation projects, and hours/months of operation. Their goal is to serve more children with less money. NHSA launches a massive campaign to protest these changes and budget cuts, forcing withdrawal of these proposals. In 1983, the Reagan administration proposes cutting training funds by 50 percent. Thousands of letters and NHSA meetings with officials later, the proposal is delayed. In 1984, NHSA enters the battle for Head Start Reauthorization. A carefully crafted bill emerges that ensures training funds are available on an on-going basis, the CDA program remains part of Head Start, performance standards will be maintained, and reauthorization will be for two years. In 1986, NHSA once again goes before the administration to protest their proposal to limit children to one year of Head Start. The campaign is successful in reminding the administration that, by law, multi-year Head Start services are allowed. In 1987, Head Start Regional offices are directed to implement minimum standard regulations without approval. NHSA begins to examine what regional offices are doing, and distrib-

utes to every region a position paper about the law versus regulations. The NHSA wraps up its Reagan era activities by discussing with congressional committees the serious problems created by the low salaries paid through Head Start. In 1988, Congress appropriates more than $50 million for Head Start salary improvements.

The Bush Administration - 1988 to 1992. Throughout this administration, NHSA efforts focused on Head Start Reauthorization in 1990 and the Head Start Improvement Act of 1992. Key provisions of this Reauthorization include: a quality set-aside of $50 million, 2% reserve for training, expansion of parent/child centers, minimum teacher qualifications with at least one CDA teacher in every classroom, a comprehensive report to Congress on Head Start by January 1994, a report on the status of children every two years, a longitudinal study on the progress of Head Start children, establishing transition projects and clarifying the rights of local programs. The historic Improvement Act includes provisions for facilities purchase, waivers for non-federal regulations, transportation regulations, health services for younger siblings, protection of quality set-aside, review of new grantees after one year, literacy and child development training to parents.

The Clinton Administration - 1992 to present. Again, NHSA works closely with this administration on the Head Start reauthorization. The Landmark Reauthorization Act signed in 1994, plays a critical role in Head Start expansion and quality improvement. The bill includes the following: authorization of funds for expansion and quality improvement, revised and undated performance standards, appropriate outcome measures, collaboration grants to states, and guidelines for staff qualifications and development. The intent of this 4 year reauthorization is to bring to realization the recommendations made in the report to Congress, "Creating a 21st Century Head Start. In 1996, a new Congress arrives in Washington determined to reduce the federal deficit, reduce and reform federal welfare programs, and cut most social programs. In the midst of this trend, NHSA is able to help secure a funding increases for Head Start. However, critical issues still face Head Start families: welfare reform, elimination of social services to illegal immigrants and reduction of services to immigrants. Because Head Start serves large numbers of immigrant families, NHSA closely follows the legislation moving through Congress. During the last weeks of Welfare Reform-debates, a provision surfaces that would deny Head Start to immigrant families. In response to a huge outcry from Head Start, Congress amends the legislation to allow Head Start to continue serving immigrant families. In 1997, NHSA begins again to prepare for Head Start reauthorization scheduled for 1998. As a result of their many years of experience with reauthorization, NHSA is setting the groundwork for key provisions of the new bill - rather than waiting to find out what is in store for Head Start programs. One of their strategies is to help every elected official gain first-hand knowledge about Head Start. With the aid of a local Head Start program and friends, NHSA brings a Head Start classroom to Capitol Hill. "Head Start on the Hill," gives elected officials, many for the first time, a chance to participate in a Head Start day. The experience is so successful, the day on the hill is now planned as an annual event.



Metlakatla Indian Community Head Start Director Theo McIntyre. Transition project presentation NHSA conference.

A Legacy of Success

Success comes in many forms. For a Head Start child, success may be seen on a daily basis - buttoning a coat, sharing a book, using words to solve problems. For a Head Start parent, success may be measured not only from observing the gains their children are making; but the positive changes that are occurring in their own lives - serving for the first time on a policy making committee, attending training and education sessions, volunteering in a classroom, working in a rewarding and supportive program. For Head Start staff, success may come from charting the growth of the children, observing changes in the family, or developing a new and innovative project to serve children and families. For a Head Start community, success may be measured by the economic opportunities available through Head Start, better child health, increased parental involvement in public school and community activities; the decrease in school drop-out rates, juvenile crime, family violence.

Annie K. Alexie, Rural Cap Regional Manager, Yupik Bilingual program presentation, NHSA conference.

For each of these successes and countless others, NHSA has played a critical role. The mission of NHSA is not just to act as a strong advocate for the Head Start community in Washington, D.C. Its mission, like Head Start, is comprehensive - responding to all of the diverse needs of the children, family, staff, and programs that, together, make up the Head Start community. The comprehensive mission of NHSA is to:

- Define and implement strategies for maintaining, improving, and funding Head Start programs that respond to the needs of the general membership.
- Provide training and professional development services for all categories of membership.
- Advocate for the provision of quality services to the Head Start community through:
  - advocating for measures that support the development of children

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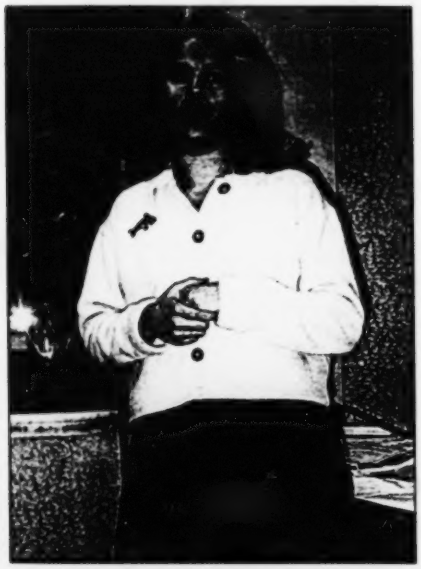
Legacy, *continued*

- advocating for measures that assist parents in meeting the needs of their children and families and becoming economically self-sufficient
- advocating for training and professional development for Head Start staff.



Jackie Tagaban, Tlingit & Haida Head Start, presents "Ways of Knowing" project for NHSA conference.

- Develop and disseminate research, information, and resources which impact child and family-oriented legislation and Head Start program delivery.

A shinning example of NHSA's ability to accomplish this comprehensive mission is the Annual NHSA Conference. The conference has endured and grown from the 1974 conference in Chicago attended by a small group of directors, to a national event. This year, over six thousand members of the Head Start community met in Seattle, Washington to celebrate NHSA's 25th Anniversary. Each day of the conference, in any one of the general sessions, workshops, training, research or educational sessions; in the hallways, lunches and banquet celebrations - the richness, diversity, and success of Head Start was reflected again and again. It is no small accomplishment to provide a calendar of events that is meaningful to parents, staff, directors, program managers and elected officials; or to include in each of those events, meaningful information that can be taken home to enrich the lives of our Head Start children and families.

At the conference, it was possible to share the accomplishments of Head Start programs from every state, and to take pride in that sharing. Delegates from the Alaska Head Start Association were among those sharing their many accomplishments. Conference attendees from other states were able to attend training sessions about Alaska's dental and family wellness projects, receive information about projects in Head Start programs from Metlakatla to Bethel, and to share with Alaska Governor Tony Knowles, his statewide programs and hopes for all children and families.

Our Alaska Head Start Association takes great pride in the accomplishments of the parents, staff, and friends that make up its diverse membership; in our collaborations with other Alaskan programs and services for children and families; and in our Governor's continued support of our work. Governor Knowles was invited to address the general session of the NHSA's 25th Anniversary Annual Conference. His remarks reflect not only the accomplishments of the NHSA, but those of Alaska as well - they are a fitting conclusion to this tribute to the Head Start Association.

Alaska Governor Tony Knowles Remarks, National Head Start Conference, April 23, 1998 – excerpts.

(note: a complete copy of the speech may be obtained from the Alaska Governor's Office 907-586-9832)

. . . "As a rookie Governor attending my first meeting of the National Governor's Association in 1995, I remember the theme then was children's issues." . . ."And every year since, under both Republican and Democratic Governors, the NGA's annual focus has been children.

. . . "Championing children, however safe today, hasn't always been popular. I believe in large part due to the courageous leadership in this room, a major tide of change has swept over the country.

Think back 25 years ago to 1973 when this organization was founded. Then, the notion of government playing a major role in the lives of preschool children was a pretty revolutionary idea. The early 1970's was an era of distrust and disillusionment - Watergate, Vietnam, the killing fields of Cambodia, the Cold War, the drug culture. There were misgivings about LBJ's Great Society; doubts about the effectiveness of the War on Poverty;

Tanana Chiefs Head Start prepares an Alaskan treat for NHSA conference participants.

Alaska Head Start Program

Program and Design and Management

Staff Training/ Qualifications

Head Start Standards require:

current & former parents receive employment preference

- staff that represent the ethnic, cultural background of families; able to communicate in home language
- staff qualified in theory of principles of early childhood growth & development; early childhood education; family support
- health providers experienced in public health; nursing; health education; maternal child health

staff providing services for nutrition; mental health; disabilities; medical procedures; must have applicable licensing

- staff providing home visiting services; family services; parent involvement; infant/ toddler services; must be educated in applicable professional fields
- training/orientation about goals/requirements for Head Start provided for all new staff
- training/orientation about goals/requirements for Head Start provided for all new staff
- programs must establish & implement training & education system with academic credit; career development opportunities for career advancement in Head Start or related fields
- training in identifying & reporting abuse & neglect
- training in transition planning for families into & out of Head Start

Program Evaluation

Programs must develop & implement on-going process for planning that includes:

- community assessment
- developing multi-year program goals & short term goals & financial objectives
- develop written plans for implementing services in all program parts
- review plans & progress in meeting them by staff, policy council, parent committee at least annually
- revise & update plans as needed
- conduct yearly self-assessment

establish & implement procedures for on-going monitoring of all local programs & grantee program

- develop plans & time tables to correct identified differences & problems

On a 3 year rotating basis, all grantees receive joint federal & state on-site review for compliance with Head Start Performance Standards

MIS Data/Reporting

Head Start programs must have Program Information Systems to provide:

- accurate & timely information on child/family/staff
- generate monthly reports on status of finances
- required reports for state, federal, local, or other organizations quarterly
- specific program data on all program components such as immunizations, health screenings, etc
- year end Program Information Report for feds, & state

- abide by Head Start standards of conduct, health & wellness guidelines
- every classroom must have a CDA or early childhood professional

Program Structure

Head Start is a nation-wide comprehensive child/family program. All Head Start programs are required to comply with requirements of Head Start Program Performance Standards 45CFR Part 1304

Head Start is funded by federal and state grants to Head Start grantees who establish and administer local Head Start programs.

Federal oversight is provided through monitoring by feds & state

The Head Start Association provides coordination, training, collaboration between all local programs

Head Start parents, staff & friends can be members of the State and National Head Start Associations

Decision Making Systems

Head Start must establish & maintain shared governance structure through which parents share in decision making & must consist of: Policy Council and/or Policy Committee established at grantee level comprised of parents (51%) & community representatives

Responsibility of policy groups are:

- funding, applications
- program planning, goals
- program assessment audit
- personnel policies (contact, hiring, termination)
- link to parent committee, grantee management staff, state/federal agencies & organization

Parent Committee
established at local program level comprised of parent members only

Responsibilities include:

- advise staff in developing & implementing local program policies, services
- plan, conduct & participate in programs & activities for parents
- participate in recruitment & screening of Head Start employees

Facilities

Head Start physical environments & facilities must:

- comply with all health, safety, fire regulations of federal and state standards
- comply with standards for AD
- facilities must have minimum of 35 sq. feet of usable indoor space per child
- space must be organized into functional areas that support early childhood growth & development
- materials, equipment, toys, must be supportive of educational objectives, cultur & ethnic backgrounds, age-appropriate, safe, provide variety of learning experience
- facilities are locally owned maintained by Head Start to meet federal & state mandate for Head Start facilities

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fears about the disintegration of the family.

Yet, one beacon - Head Start - has always burned bright. And all it has represented these 33 years has survived: strong families, parental responsibility, love, care, nutrition, and how the doors to opportunity later in life are opened at the youngest age.

These principles resonated thanks to the tireless, relentless championing of you in this room. As a result of your work, the quality of life for millions of Americans has improved dramatically.

I can personally vouch that's the case in Alaska, where Head Start is alive and well across a territory one-fifth the size of the rest of the country - sorry Texas.

Today, Head Start programs in 92 Alaskan communities serve about 32-hundred children. There are nearly 600 Alaskans working in Head Start programs around the state, about half of whom are, or were, Head Start parents."

. . . ."But the recognition and thanks all of you deserve is only part of my purpose here today. Faced with decreasing public budgets, less federal involvement and fewer than 30 percent of qualified American children receiving Head Start, what is the future of this extraordinarily successful program?

How can we reach out and engage support to build upon and expand this initiative of early intervention and prevention? What is the right number of children served? 30 percent, 50 percent, 60 percent? I believe we must serve all children who need quality early development assistance in their lives.

My experience as Governor has led me to conclude that we have a moral, legal and financial obligation to raise the level of these services to a new and higher standard. We need a new philosophical mandate - to broaden the circle, deepen the commitment. There must be an overriding public interest in every single child realizing their full potential rather than being both a victim and victimizing society. We've all seen both."

. . . "Certainly, no one would dispute the responsibility of parents and families to be involved in the lives of these youngest children. I believe the best child safety and protection system is a strong family.

I also maintain that the Head Start philosophy - parental involvement and education, combined with early childhood development - reinforces a strong family. It doesn't contradict it.

Quality early childhood programs support the primary role of the family, just as traditional K through 12 public education - which has long served as a foundation of this nation's progress - supports families.

The question is: how do we convince the rest of America to extend that same relationship between traditional education and families to quality childhood programs at the earliest years? The answer is look at the evidence.

First, does this investment reduce the future cost of government? Democrats and Republicans all join the chorus in calling for decreasing the size of government. What's just as relevant is where the reduction takes place. The shape of any budget is just as important as it size."

. . . "The second reason I believe in the partnership between families and early childhood programs is public safety. The new book, "Ghosts in the Nursery, graphically shows how a predisposition to violent behavior is 'hardwired' into the brain from the earliest age. It compellingly demonstrates - 'the poisonous effect that neglect abuse, trauma, injury and toxicity have in the first 33 months of life.'

One in 20 children born today will spend some part of his or her adult life in jail.

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Alaska Head Start Association NEWS

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the National Head Start Association (NHSA). NHSA is a private not-for-profit membership organization representing more the 800,000 children and their families and 147,000 staff in approximately 2,212 Head Start programs across the United States. NHSA provides a national forum for the continued enhancement of Head Start services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. It is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to the concerns of the Head Start Community. NHSA is governed by a board of directors composed of a director, staff, parent, and friend representative from each of the 12 federal Head Start regions. NHSA is supported and guided by community Head Start programs through their respective State Head Start Associations. The Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA) was officially incorporated in August of 1995 and now supports both the interests of each Head Start center in Alaska as well as the activities of NHSA.

Beginning with this issue of Alaska's Children, The Alaska Head Start Association News will become a regular featured section - an important way to find out what is new in our Head Start Community.

Alaska Head Start Association Committee Updates.

Training Committee. The training committee is charged with developing and coordinating training and training resources for AHSA, assisting in cultivating and using all available training resources for Head Start, and insuring representation for staff, parent, and director affiliates through the Quality Improvement Center. Currently, the training committee is working with Bonny Headley of the Quality Improvement Center to plan the Early Years/Critical Years conference to be held in Anchorage, September 23-25, 1998. The conference is being jointly sponsored by the Alaska Departments of Education, Community and Regional Affairs and Health/Social Services. The committee recently selected nominees for the state and regional coordinating councils for the Quality Center and Quality Center for Disabilities. A third project of the training committee is to work on guidelines for the National Head Start Awards timeline for 1998. If you are interested in serving on the committee, contact Nancy Hannigan at RurAL Cap.

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NEWS, *continued*

Advocacy Committee. The committee strives to provide members with tools to become more effective advocates for children and their families. The committee has been working to get the word out about children's issues being considered by the Alaska legislature this year; and to provide general hints for advocates. Following the AHSA Juneau Board Meeting in February, committee members received a meeting and legislative update, and information on the Governor's Smart Start initiative. The advocacy committee encourages all AHSA members to remember their individual and combined power as advocates for children and families. Interested in this committee? Call Mara Parker of the Friends Affiliate.

Networking Committee. The committee is eager to keep the momentum going from the Juneau meeting. The purpose of the committee is to establish communications throughout the Head Start community, to oversee the development of Association newsletters and to insure that the Association has representation on, and communication with, various statewide organizations. To begin to work toward fulfilling this purpose, the committee decided to work through the Alaska Head Start Collaboration Grant to have the news of the Association distributed in their quarterly newsletter, Alaska's Children. It is an exciting way for AHSA to easily and effectively distribute information. The committee is also working on developing a logo for the association and on collecting photos and photo releases for future newsletters. If you are interested in working on this committee, contact Bonnie Powell at Chugachmiut.

Bylaws Committee. The committee is charged with conducting an annual review of the bylaws, resolving questions as presented by members, and making recommendations for amendments as may be needed or required. The committee met in February and began their annual review. If you have questions or input contact Linda Norman at Chugachmiut.

Election and Membership Committee. The committee is established to facilitate and oversee annual elections to the Association board and committees Due to the past work by this committee, we currently have a full board and active membership on all standing committees As of February 1998, we had over 175 members from all over the state of Alaska and each affiliate is well represented in the membership list. To serve on this committee contact Sarah Kuenzli at Tanana Chiefs.

Budget Committee. The committee oversees the current budget and future viability of the Association along with researching grants and funding resources for the AHSA and Board. The AHSA is currently fiscally sound with individual and agency dues providing the basis of the budget. Clarence Johnson with the AME program is the committee chair and welcomes new committee members.

AHSA Affiliate Group Updates.

Parents Affiliate. The group representative to the Board is Clarence Johnson (AME/St. Mary's-Region X) and Yvonne Lachar (Kids Corps/Anchorage - Region X). During the Juneau Affiliate meeting two new board members were selected. They are Crystal McNeill (Tlingit and Haida/Klawock-Region XI) and Jean Eyre (Tlingit and Haida/Juneau-Region XI). The Parent Affiliate also selected alternates Bernie Edwards (AME/Pilot Station-Region X) and Melinda Tnape (Chugachmiut/Port Graham-Region XI). The parent affiliates reported they enjoyed their time together and learned a lot from each other.

Staff Affiliate. The group has set their goal for the year to increase their membership. Nancy Hannigan (RurAL Cap/Anchorage-Region X) is currently serving as the chair of the affiliate with Laurel Young (Kids Corps/Anchorage-Region X) serving as the Region X rep. Both Nancy and Laurel along with Katie Charles (AVCP Akiachak-Region XI) and Linda Norman (Chugachmiut/Port Graham - Region XI) represent the staff affiliate on the AHSA Board. The affiliate is interested in holding future teleconferences on a regular basis and looks forward to becoming more involved.

Friends Affiliate. The group continues to grow and provides the AHSA with a rich diversity of support. Friends members are scattered throughout Alaska and the lower 48 and represent a wide background of Head Start supporters from past parents to current program representatives, consultants and legislators. Susan Cocklin (Anchorage), Anna Franks (Anchorage) and Mara Parker (Anchorage) represent this diverse group for AHSA.

Directors Affiliate. Last September the group joined forces with a group from New Mexico to participate in the Mentorship Capacity Building Project. Since then the affiliate has participated in three training sessions under the direction of Dr. Jim Gage. The training has helped the affiliate look at where it has been and to become excited about future directions. If you notice your Head Start Director dancing in the toll booth - join them. Last September, the members also received very valuable and timely training on outcome funding through the Rensselaerville Institute. Mary Ellen Fritz (South Central Foundation/Anchorage - Region XI) chairs the affiliate. Sharon Trish (AME/Bethel - Region X), Sarah Kuenzli (TCC/Fairbanks - Region XI), Pan Gingue (UTDC/Tok - Region X), and Bonnie Powell (Chugachmiut/Homer - Region XI represent the directors on the AHSA board.

Alaska Head Start Assocation Parent Representatives. Crystal McNeil-T/H, Klawock; Clarence Johnson-AME, St. Mary's; Yvonne Lacher-Kids Corp, Anchorage; Jean Eyre-T/H, Klawock (not pictured).

WANTED: A LOGO FOR AHSA.

Please join in our search and send in an idea for a logo. All you have to do is submit original designs representing Alaska's children and families. Designs must be black on white (8 1/2" by 11"). Please attach an explanation or story about your design. All designs are due by May 15. Send to Bonnie Powell, P.O. Box 3070, Homer, AK 99603.

WANTED: PHOTOGRAPHS.

We want to spread the word about the quality experiences that children and families get through Head Start. We are hoping to get a few photographs from every Head Start program in Alaska that shows the diversity of children and the breadth of wonderful experiences they have at Head Start. If you have photos that you want to share, please sent them with a copy of written permission to use them in publications. They must be signed by the parent/guardian of the child. If an adult is in the photo, we will also need signed permission to use the photo. Copies of the permission to use photos from your enrollment paperwork will be adequate. Please be sure to identify the individuals in each photograph and the site/program. We are hoping to have a group of photos submitted for the summer newsletter so please send them in by May 15. Photos can be sent to Karen Kallen-Brown, Tanana Chiefs Conference Head Start, 122 First Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99701.

Children's Cabinet News

Mush for Kids

On April 4, 1998, an amazing group of people in Fairbanks put together a one-of-a-kind event for children and families. The event, called "Mush for Kids," included the usual activities featured at gatherings for families: music, dance, food, and activity booths. But the main attractions at this event could only be found in Alaska, the dogs of the Iditarod Dog Sled Race and, of course, their trainers. These amazing mushers, The Resource Center for Children and Families, the Friends of Alaska Children's Trust and numerous community volunteers helped to organize "Mush for Kids" as a fundraiser for the Alaska Children's Trust. Over 2,000 people attended and all proceeds from the event were donated to the Children's Trust. Children and adults were able to meet famous mushers such as Jeff Munson, Susan Butcher, Jeff King and Dee Dee Jonrowe and some of their dogs. A dog sled demonstration and race was originally planned for the day, but due to El Nino and unseasonably warm weather, ice conditions on the Chena River were unsafe. But, because mushers are characteristically adaptable, they put together a mush Olympic obstacle course, selected young team mates to help them run the course, and created a day to remember. In fact, it was so successful, the mushers are already planning the Second Annual Mush for Kids to be held next year. The proceeds from "Mush for Kids" will be deposited into the Alaska Children's Trust Fund to help build up the principal of the fund. Each year, interest earned from the fund is used to fund community based projects to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Other fundraising efforts of the Children's Trust include a Heritage Birth Certificate for Alaska's newest citizens. Rie Munoz, one of Alaska's most noted artists has donated art work for the certificate that will also include the child's birth information. This birth certificate will be available for purchase by parents or by family members and friends as a gift to new parents. The Heritage Birth Certificate is not just for newborns, however. A certificate can also be purchased for anyone born in Alaska. The gift can be given for birthdays, anniversaries, retirements, etc. A portion of the purchase price of the certificate will be donated to the Children's Trust.

The Children's Trust also has a children's book, Little Bears Alaska Reader available for purchase. The book is filled with photographs from some of Alaska's finest photographers. From Nome to Ketchikan, kids will find pictures and verse that they are familiar with. Help your child learn the ABC's with Alaskan people, scenes and animals - and help support the Trust's efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by purchasing a copy of the book, contact Shari Paul at 465-4870.

Children's Trust Grants

The Alaska Children's Trust will be issuing their second year of grants this summer. Grant applications are due by April 30th. The review committee will be meeting May 20-22 to select this year's grantees. Grant awards will be made in early June.

Smart Start for Alaska's Children

During his annual State of the Child Address, Governor Knowles announced a comprehensive plan to combat child abuse through a combination of better health care, proven prevention programs and improved child protective services. The $32 million dollar package is currently moving through the legislative process. Budget concerns have prompted many legislators to voice concern about the plan. At the same time, many Alaskans have voiced their support for the proposal, signed resolutions supporting it, and spoken to their

Please turn to back page

Calendar of Events

June 1 Nationwide	*Stand for Children*	
June 4-6 Anchorage	*Alaska Head Start Association Board Meeting*	Sharon Trish 907-543-3401
June 5 Anchorage	*Alaska Head Start Association Committee meetings (via teleconference call to all members not attending Anchorage meetings*	Sharon Trish
June 25-26 Washington, D.C.	*Collaboration Network Meeting*	
August 6-8 Washington, D.C	*Transition of Children and Families from Head Start to Public School Association National Conference*	
September 23-2 Sheraton Hotel Anchorage, AK	*Early Years Critical Years Symposium*	Shari Paul 907-465-4870

COLLABORATION B•R•I•E•F•I•N•G•S

Ways of Knowing . . . Parenting Strategies Through Tradition and Technology

At the National Head Start Convention in Seattle this month, Alaska workshop participants were given a preview of one of Tlingit and Haida Head Start's amazing projects . . the Alaska Native Home Base Video project "Ways of Knowing .. Parenting Strategies Through Tradition and Technology. The project grew out of a concern in Alaska about the well-being of our children and their families. Although many grow up in loving homes with parents and other family members who tend to their physical and emotional needs, there are many children who do not. Stressors like social and cultural change, economic hardship, lack of resources and the remote geography of Alaska, all contribute to real problems of isolation and poverty, child abuse and neglect, community violence, and substance abuse. The project uses new technologies to glean and share Native and other traditions, skills, and strategies for understanding and raising children in this unique place we call Southeast, Alaska. Through the use of video, increased home visits, and supplemental materials, we will be able to reach into the homes and communities we are currently not able to serve - and to serve all families in more meaningful and useful ways. In addition, there are few if any, early childhood education tools available for parents which embrace the Native culture very much alive in this region. This project will provide Native parents, children and the trainers who work with them, important links to role models and learning from their own cultures and backgrounds in all program elements. All videos produced by the project can also be distributed and seen on local television in all rural and urban areas in Alaska.

And the list of videos being produced for this project is impressive - 15 videos (ten minutes each) on parent education - prenatal, infants and toddlers. Additionally, 21 videos (20 minutes each) on a preschool series are being developed. Subject matter for the parent education videos include: prenatal care, child birth and infancy development, infancy care, toddler development, toddler care, literacy and language, guidance and discipline, family, family support, family finances, multi-generational grief, creative development from infancy, alcoholic/substance abuse/family violence, early childhood education, and children with special needs. The preschool video series subjects include: culture and heritage, nutrition, literacy, helping children deal with stressful times and crisis, child guidance and discipline, early childhood education and the preschooler, socialization, physical health care, dental health care, special needs and disabilities, child development, creative development, family, sibling rivalry, language development, home and community safety, getting ready for kindergarten, parenting together, outdoor environment as the learning ground, parents learning and working, math and science.

The project, which is funded through a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, is in full swing. The first set of videos are expected to be available in May. For more information on the video project, contact Jackie Tagaban, Tlingit and Haida Head Start at 907-586-1432. This promises to be and incredibly moving and important teaching and learning project.

Alaska Kids. Love Them.

Immunize Them. The recent news that Alaska has fallen to 48th out of the 50 states in vaccinating our children was disheartening and should be a concern to every Alaskan. We should be alarmed because immunizations not only protect each child, they also protect the health of the entire community. The more children who are immune to the 11 preventable childhood illnesses, the less risk there is for others in the community who may be vulnerable to diseases - from the very young to the very old - those with weakened immune systems and those who are unable to access immunizations services.

Because of the success of vaccines in preventing disease, many parents believe the childhood diseases that cripple and kill children no longer exist. These diseases are still prevalent in the population, but they are preventable. The truth is that vaccines protect your child against: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hib meningitis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and chicken pox. With the exception of tetanus, these diseases can be spread from one child to another - at school, the grocery store, on the playground, at church - anywhere.

Research has clearly demonstrated that children need 80% of their shots by age 2. Parents should take their child's shot record with them EVERY time they take their child to the doctor or nurse. Alaska's health care providers have to see a child's shot record in order to assess that child's immunization status. A child needs their immunizations on time, every time. By providing your child's shot record every time, parents can help protect their child form these serious, but preventable diseases. from Dr. Peter Nakamura, Director Division of Public Health, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Alaska Partners

Thousands of Alaskans work with young children or with their families. They work in child care centers and family child care homes, in Head Start programs and resource and referral agencies, in kindergartens through 3rd grade classrooms - both public and private, in school age child care programs and lab schools. They carry such job titles as caregiver, teacher, infant learning specialist, nanny, staff supervisor, aide, advocate, professor. And every one of them needs knowledge and skills to most effectively do their part to nuture and stimulate children and support their families efforts to do the same.

At present, Alaskans who work in the Early Care and Education field have access to numerous sources of training and education. Unfortunately, this collection of training opportunities is too limited in scope and geography to meet the range of professional development needs of all who work in this important field. Even more troubling is the fact that these learning opportunities are not united to form a system within which a person can map a course for their own growth and development in the field. And it lacks a method of documenting training, education and experience that should translate into higher levels of compensation.

The Alaska partners for Quality Early Care and Education would like to change that. "The Partners Project," funded by the Alaska State Head Start Collaboration Grant, has un-

dertaken the task of designing a professional development system for consideration by the Early Care and Education field. The draft system will be reviewed and discussed by interested community members at several upcoming forums including the AEYC conference and Early Years Symposium scheduled for September.

Three work groups are currently developing four key components of a professional development system. They are:

Component 1. A Core Knowledge Document. This document will outline the knowledge needed by professionals and the standards for demonstrating knowledge and competency in each area and for each level of professional development. All training will be referenced to this important document so that an individual's professional development may be documented, recognized and tracked. It will be structured around the following 7 areas which have been adapted from the NAEYC and the CDA Council. The Core Knowledge Areas are:

1. Health and Safety
2. Child Growth and Development
3. Environment and Curriculum
4. Family and Community Partnerships
5. Cultural and Individual Diversity
6. Professionalism
7. Administration and Management

Component 2. A Professional Development Framework. At present, 6 levels of professional growth have been identified and defined by education attainment. An orientation level is also under consideration as are refinements to this framework. The 6 levels in the framework are:

Level I - Apprentice/Entry
Level II - Credential level (CDA or EC Certificate)
Level III - Associate Degree
Level IV - BA Degree
Level V - Graduate Degree
Level VI - Advanced Degree

Component 3. A Training Coordination System. A work group is currently exploring options for coordinating the efforts of the various training entities in the state into a comprehensive system. Objectives of the system include: training that is referenced to Alaska's Core Knowledge Document and complies with quality control standards; and a systematic process for training entities to contribute to a training opportunities clearinghouse and participate in planning efforts to identify needs in the field.

Component 4. A Professional Development Registry. This component is a Professional Development Registry to document, recognize, and track education attainment for individuals working in the field. Four other states have established personnel registries and a work group is comparing these models to develop a proposal for Alaska.

A steering committee guides the activities of this project. Members of the committee represent various sectors of the field - family child care, center based child care, Head Start, school age care, government, university, resource and referral programs, Tribal child care programs, military child care programs, and advocates. This steering committee has adopted an approach focused on these practical, attainable steps that will provide an important framework for professional development in the field.

For more information on the Partners Project, contact Mia Oxley, The Alaska Partners Project Coordinator, phone: 907-745-8659, e-mail: oxley@alaska.net emdi

STATUS REPORT

Alaska's Children

- In America, children under age 15 are 12 times more likely to die from guns than children in 25 other industrialized countries - including Israel and Northern Ireland. Every hour in America, 14 children die from gunfire. Of all the children killed by firearms in the 26 countries studied, 86% lived in American.

  source: Children's Defense Fund, CDF Reports, August 1997

- The rate of child deaths from homicide nearly tripled between 1960 and 1991. Homicide is now the fourth leading cause of death among children ages 1 to 9.

  source: 1997 Kids Count Alaska Databook

- There was a 46% increase in gunshot wounds from 1991 to 1994 among Alaskans age 19 and under, while during the same period this population only increased 5 %. After age 10, firearm injuries and deaths increased steadily for each year of age through age 19. From 1991 to 1994, 129 children were hospitalized for firearm injuries and 98 children died.

  source: Serious and Fatal Child and Adolescent Injuries in Alaska 1991-1994

- Gun production has declined in the U.S. in recent years to 3.8 million in 1996 from 4.4 million in 1989 according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Officials say the primary market - white males - is saturated. The gun industry has targeted America's youth as their next major market. The industries' efforts to interest children in firearms include a mascot, Eddie Eagle. Eddie Eagle appears at shopping malls, schools, a cartoon video, on school lunch boxes, backpacks and posters. The Eddie Eagle program is a way for children to learn safety and respect for guns. Adversaries say that Eddie Eagle's real job is similar to that of the tobacco industries Joe Camel - a seductive campaign to make children want guns. The Violence Policy Center and the American Academy of Pediatrics say gun-safety programs don't work for curious youngsters, who often are impulsive and whose imaginations are fed by gun violence on television. The answer they say is fewer guns and guns that are locked away.

  source: The Washington Post National Weekly Edition, April 6, 1998

- Since October of 1997, three school-related shootings have left 10 dead and 22 wounded. The shootings have all be committed by children under the age of 18.

  source: The Associated Press, April 1998

Alaska's Children

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project
Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs
P.O. Box 112100
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2100

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Cabinet News, *continued*

elected representatives about supporting the plan. Supporters of this child-abuse prevention plan have come from some unexpected places. Alaskans Against the Death Penalty supports early childhood intervention and prevention as an alternative to capital punishment. Says president Jim McComas, "Our view is that money that would be wasted on the death penalty can be much better spent on trying to reach kids early — addressing the substance abuse problem.

State Fire Marshall Craig Goodrich has his own reasons for promoting healthier families. Many young fire-setters are victims of childhood abuse or neglect, he says. "When they don't have control over their lives in any way, fire is one of the ways they can display control. Goodrich sees the governor's Smart Start initiative as a way to unite the many groups with a stake in improving the lives of children. "It's as if the vehicle is stuck in the mud, and we've all got a rope on the thing and are pulling with all our might — but we're pulling in every direction. Smart Start gets us all coordinated and heading in the right direction."

Among those who have signed resolutions of support for Smart Start are: The cities of Sitka, Petersburg and Nome; the Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Alaska Commission on Aging, the National Association for the Education of Young Children - Southeast, the Mental Health Association in Alaska, the Alaska Community Mental Health Services Association; and the Bartlett Regional Hospital.

Knowles, *continued*

A just completed survey of Alaska inmates shows that 82 percent are victims of abuse as a child.

Those who fight crime in the trenches every day understand the connection between abuse, neglect and crime. It's better to build a child than repair an adult. They believe the best crime prevention tool is investing in children."

. . ."Throughout the audience here this morning, I see pioneers, or the ultimate Alaska compliment: sourdoughs - who began with Head Start 33 years ago - who have helped better the lives of a generation of Americans.

And I also see those to whom the torch of partnership is being passed - those dedicated to bettering the lives of the next generation of American children.

In this room, I know we share a vision. Its purpose is good. Its urgency is real. Our power is great. And forged in the fires of idealism and tempered by the wisdom of our experience, our spirit is strong. We are one family, one America - together.

Now we must reach out to the hands of all Americans. In each home, each neighborhood, each village, each community, in each of the 50 states.

Our mission together is this: We will give our kids books, instead of guns. We will build schools, not prisons. We will extend our hand in love, not raise it in anger. We will plant the seeds of hope, not despair. We will have zero tolerance for the abuse and neglect of our children. We will - with the grace of God - break the cycle of violence." . . .

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project

Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs • Quarterly Report • Summer1998

Alaska's Children

Early Years, Critical Years

The River Story

One bright, sunny afternoon, a group of friends gathered on the bank of a stream to have a picnic. They had just finished their preparations for lunch when someone shouted, "There is a child out here in the center of the stream." One of the men kicked off his shoes and ran into the river to rescue the child. Just as he got back to shore and put the child on dry land, someone else shouted, "There's another child out there now." The same man ran into the river for the second time and, out of breath, soon came back with the second child. Friends made sure that both children were dried off and covered with towels before finding them warm blankets.

The rescuer, who was just starting to take off his wet clothes, suddenly heard someone shout again, "There's another child out there now." Instead of rushing in for the third time, he said to his friends, "Someone else go in this time." And with that, wet clothes and all, he slipped on his sneakers and started to run up the path which went along the edge of the stream. The others asked, "Where are you going?" The rescuer said, "I'm going to run up around the bend and find out who is pushing those kids into the river."

This story is being told and retold in many circles. It is used to illustrate the struggle that many children and families are facing today and how we, as a society, are choosing to deal with their reality. In recent years, many national and state efforts have been implemented that are having a positive effect on our children and their families. But while some children and families are doing better, there are still many, many more that are surrounded by

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The Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
For more information, contact the Alaska Head Start Office at (907) 465-4860.
Project Director–Marilyn Webb; Newsletter Editor–Dorothy Douglas

Early Years, *continued*
crime, poverty, violence, neglect and a host of other risks to child health and well-being. When children's lives are shaped by negative experiences and when they do not have the supports they need to overcome these early experiences, they are essentially being pushed into a river. Certainly, an important sequel to this story is - once the rescuer has identified who or what is forcing children into the river, what will he do to stop more children from being pushed into the river? Once in the river, what harm and damage is done to a child? What is up around the bend and what will we do about it?

Around the Bend . . .

We are likely to find a curious mix of not just children, but adults as well. We would see many children of all ages, sizes, abilities, races, and economic backgrounds. Many children will be standing perilously close to the river on unstable ground. As one child looses their footing and falls into the river, another will immediately take their place - there are always more waiting to fall. The children closest to the river will be infants and toddlers, our youngest and most vulnerable children.

The adults standing behind the children at the river may represent those who are responsible for children - parents, families, teachers, care givers, policy makers, and other community members. Rather than just standing helplessly by the river, many of these adults will be frantically trying to keep children safe from harm. But there are just too many children and too many of the adults are not strong enough to help. Our young children have no choice about the circumstances that control their lives. They must rely on their parents, families and other adults in their community to keep them safe.

When the children fall into the river, there is no doubt that they will suffer some injury. Some will have acquired enough strength and skills to swim to safety. Others may be rescued further down the river, but will always carry the memory of their experiences. Some will not survive at all.

In Real Life

The river scenario illustrates what is happening to many children and families in real life.

Children in this story are being constantly pushed toward failure because of risk factors that are present in their lives. These risk factors may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse; neglect; family and community violence; poverty; poor health and nutrition; lack of adequate health care, especially prenatal care; lack of quality early care and education opportunities. When any of these risk factors are present in a child's life, their future health, growth and development can be threatened. Multiple risks factors in a child's life will increase the likelihood that a child will have a bleak future. The most at-risk children are the youngest, age birth to three.

When parents, families and other caring adults have the resources they need to support and nuture children, they have the ability to help children overcome risk factors in their lives. But when families lack resources and support systems such as health insurance, education and training, good jobs, and quality child care; they may also lack the capacity to assist children. When other adults in the community do not have the resources they need, such as adequate funding for quality community programs and services, long range plans for children and families, they too may be unable to keep children on safe ground.

Many children who grow up surrounded by negative and harmful experiences will carry those experiences with them into adulthood and their futures are predictable and bleak: school drop-outs, teen parents, juvenile criminals, long-term chronic illnesses, substance abusers, unemployed citizens. But, it doesn't have to be this way, not even for our most at-risk children and families.

What We Know

Today, our core knowledge about how children grow, develop and learn, is greater than ever before. We know what it takes to support and nurture healthy growth and development for children. Current research and long-term studies clearly document what happens when children live in abusive, unstimulating or neglectful environments. We also know what actions can be taken so that children are not subjected to negative experiences. In other words, we know how to prevent children from becoming "at-risk", and we can document than, in the long run, prevention is less costly that treating problems after they have occurred. Following is a brief summary of what we know.

Brain Growth and Development.

Within the last ten years, the development of new technologies such as brain imaging, decades of research and a growing concern about the academic achievement, health and safety of young children has led to some startling insights about child development. The most startling of these discoveries are about the growth and development of the brain before birth and during the first three years of a child's life. Brain growth and development begins soon after conception. During prenatal development, only the most primitive areas of the brain that control heart rate, breathing, regulate body temperature or produce reflexes are developed. Our genetic code determines only the brain's main circuits, hard wiring only those that are essential for survival at birth. Soon after birth, the processes of brain growth and development continues at an astounding rate; but now neural activity is driven not by genetic code, but by the experiences a child receives from its environment. By the age of 3, roughly 85% of the core brain structures are organized, and by the age of 10, the brain's amazing patterns of growth draw to a close. Over the next several years, the brain will destroy the weakest circuits, preserving the ones that have been magically transformed by experiences. The connections that were seldom or never used will be eliminated leaving behind a brain whose patterns of emotions, thought or behavior are, for better or worse, unique. This simplistic explanation of brain development does not even begin to describe this complicated and amazing process. Nor does it begin to communicate the importance of creating environments for children during the first three years of their life that will stimulate and nurture brain development.

The brain is the control center for movement, sleep, hunger, thirst and every other vital activity necessary to survival. All human emotions - love, hate, fear, anger, happiness, sadness - are controlled by the brain. All human intelligence - the ability to read, write, speak, play the piano, do complicated mathematical computations, receive and interpret information, is governed by the brain. Because brain growth and development is directly influenced by the experiences a child receives, the richer the environment, the richer the brain. Conversely, an environment that is not stimulating, neglectful and lacking in positive experiences can result in a disorganized and under-developed brain.

Consider the development of just one area of the brain as an example. Among the first circuits the brain constructs are those that govern feelings. Emotions develop in layers, each more complex than the last. The window of opportunity for establishing the basic foundations for human emotions begins around the age of 2 months with stress response. Between 10 and 18 months, a cluster of brain cells are busy hooking up the emotion regions of the brain. These cells seem to grow into a control switch, able to calm agitation by infusing reason into emotion. When parents sooth a child after a fall or scare, they help to train this circuit, strengthening the neural connections that form, so that the child learns how to calm herself down. During the next two years, the distress and contentment experienced by a baby evolves into more complex feelings: joy and sadness, envy and empathy, pride and shame, anger and compassion.

Children who experience abuse and neglect during this critical period of emotional development, develop brains that are exquisitely tuned to danger. At the slightest threat, their hearts race, their stress hormones surge and their brains anxiously track the nonverbal cues that signal the next attack. Since the circuits can stay excited for days, the brain remains on high alert. As a result, the brain falls behind in development and has trouble assimilating more complex information such as language. Most damaging of all is that the brain is more attuned to distress, anger, and sadness than positive emotional experiences. For children whose emotional circuits were wired by abuse and neglect in early childhood, the potential for a future of intellectual impoverishment, impulsive, aggressive and remorseless behavior is very real.

The new body of information about early childhood development clearly shows a child's early relationships and experiences are key to their emotional and intellectual development - the early years are the most critical years. **The implications of the current research are also clear - supporting a families' capacity to care for and nuture their children during these critical years is the single most important investment of our resources.** For parents, early childhood practitioners, policy makers and many others, this is a critical time to examine current programs and policies to see if today's investments are being deposited into the right savings account.

Prevention is the Key

The budget breakdown of any state will quickly point out that the biggest investments being made for children and families are not the most effective long-term investments, but rather a short-term fix. Most of our efforts and attention are directed at problem behaviors of older children: juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, school drop-outs, chronic poor health, substance abuse. As a society, we are attempting to solve problems long after they have reached a crises stage. This approach is not only the most costly - it is the least likely to succeed. We are not preventing the scores of new children from being pushed into the river, just rescuing the ones that have already fallen in. It is a long standing debate: prevention vs. treatment of problems.

Prevention is not an easily understood concept, nor has it been an easy concept to promote. There are long-standing myths and unrealistic notions about prevention that tend to get in the way of developing comprehensive prevention programs. One of the first problems is defining prevention because it means different things to different people. Consequently, we have settled on a definition that contains three separate concepts: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention means "to come before." It is what happens for everyone before there is a sign of a problem. Conditions are created that build a state of health and well-being for everyone. Providing all parents with information about their child's early development and how the kind of care they receive will affect their future development is a good example of primary prevention. Secondary prevention happens at the earliest sign of a problem or whenever a person or group can be identified as being "at risk" of developing a problem. For a prevention purist, the secondary level is not really prevention but early intervention. Tertiary prevention is treatment for a condition that already exist. The primary purpose of tertiary prevention is to treat or to punish so that the condition will not occur again. Most professionals agree that tertiary prevention is not really prevention at all, but treatment for a problem that is already out of control.

The major debate about prevention always centers around cost and success - proof that prevention works before we buy it. Because there is clear evidence that immunizing a child against polio and other childhood diseases prevents illness, there is little debate about spending money for vaccines. But bring up the budget for child care or other early childhood programs like Head Start, before a legislative budget committee and there will, without fail, be a long debate about necessary budget cuts or increases. For some prevention programs, success has not been so easy to prove. For one thing it takes a long time for the evidence to show up. Longitudinal studies of comprehensive preschool programs from the 1960's and 1970's are still in the process of tracking outcomes of the participants as they move through adolescence and adulthood. Sparked by the recent brain research information, an eight member RAND research team recently completed a rigorous and comprehensive study of nine model early childhood programs, including a 27 year study from the Perry Preschool Project and the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project, conducted from 1978 to 1982. The research team reports that intervention programs aimed at boosting the development of disadvantaged children during their critical early years can provide measurable benefits for them and long term savings for society as well. This comprehensive study coupled with intensive research on early childhood brain development lends critical support to the need for and benefits of comprehensive, quality prevention programs.

Another myth about prevention programs, especially government sponsored programs, is that they would be doing the job that parents can and should be doing. **A comprehensive early childhood program does not take over the job of parenting. Rather, two of the tests of a quality program are the recognition that parents are the child's first and lifelong teacher, and a strong parent involvement component in all aspects of the program.** Today, over half of all children spend their day in a child care or preschool setting because their parents must work outside the home. Enhancing the capacity of parents to care for and nuture children while ignoring the child care providers, teachers and staff who care for children during the day is completing only half the job. **How a child spends their hours in a child care is as critical to their development as the home environment.** If a child spends time in a poor environment with a care giver who has no training, is paid less than minimum wage, and has little concern for the child's development, critical time is being wasted. Quality child care environments are a primary prevention

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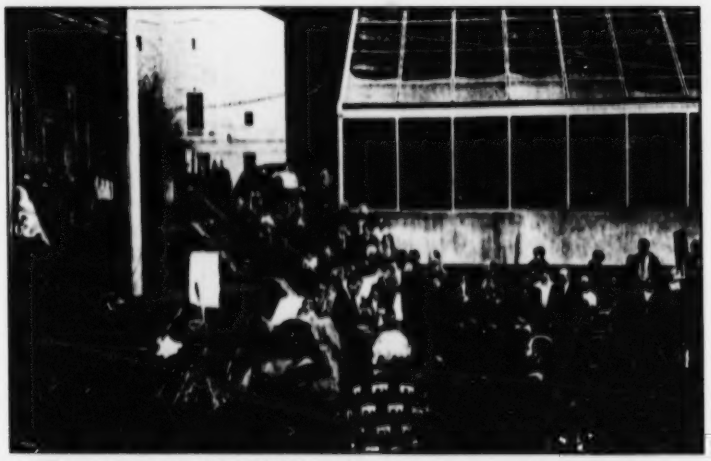


April 24, 1998, Stand for Children, Child Abuse Prevention Rally. Taking the first steps to prevent abuse and neglect means making a committment.

Early Years, *continued*

option that should be available to all parents at all income levels.

More than anything else, what we know about children is risk is not destiny. While we want all children to grow up in nurturing homes, and safe communities; we know many families face daily struggles that put their children at-risk. Poverty is a common thread that runs through many of the risk factors in a child's life. Poverty means that families cannot afford quality child care, proper nutrition, consistent preventive health care, books, stimulating toys, or a safe neighborhood to live in. Providing support to help families struggling against poverty can come not only through employment and training programs, but child care assistance, health insurance programs, and parenting education. Some families are faced with risks that are so severe, programs must be in place to intervene quickly. Children who are victims of family violence, abuse and neglect must have timely and intensive help. Sometimes, hard decisions must be made on behalf of children. We should seriously consider the affects of any child protective system that would allow a young child to move in and out of foster care year after year, after year. Among the significant findings of brain research information is the concept of brain malleability. During the first years of life, the brain maintains exceptional flexibility or malleability. At no other time will the brain be able to master new skills so readily or rebound from setbacks so easily. If there is a way to compensate for brain injury or lack of stimulating experiences in early childhood, the brain can be taught to find it. For children whose emotional circuits were wired by abuse and neglect in early childhood, the ability to overcome a grim future is greatly improved by well-designed, comprehensive programs to promote healthy cognitive, emotional and social development.

Is What We Know, What We Do?

On-going studies about the effects of comprehensive programs for young children and families and the recent research on early brain development all point to the importance of investing in efforts to improve the well-being of young children and in providing necessary supports to their families. It is a critical time for all states and all communities to examine the level of commitment to young children and families.

A study series by the National Center for Children in Poverty examined various levels of programs in place for young children and families in all 50 states in 1996 and again in 1998. The study, Map and Track, examined six core questions: Are their statewide strategies to:

- Enhance the development of infants and toddlers?
- Promote early learning and well being among preschool-aged children?
- Support families with young children as they face the challenges of parenting?
- Link comprehensive programs for young children with welfare reform implementation?
- Mobilize community leadership around an agenda for enhancing the life chances and opportunities of America's youngest children?
- Promote high-level leadership, vision, and a coherent framework around which the state can develop and sustain a bipartisan commitment to its young children over time?

The findings of the study show that:

- There are no statewide programs for infants and toddlers in 26 states, and none for preschoolers in 16 states. Half of the states are not making statewide efforts to develop family support programs for young children and families
- Only eighteen states report programs for both infants and toddlers and preschoolers.
- Even programs intended to be statewide are not necessarily implemented in all parts of the state.
- Overall levels of funding for comprehensive programs in most states remain relatively low, with half of the states spending under $10 million and three-quarters spending under $50 million.
- The seven states that had no state initiatives on behalf of young children and families in 1996, still do not have statewide efforts.
- Only 10 states report special efforts to link welfare reform implementation with comprehensive children's programs or planning initiatives.
- Only eight states are currently funding comprehensive initiatives that

Leilani Knight, Tlingit & Haida Family Wellness Coordinator and son Kai, age 14 months, attend the Stand for Children Rally—our next generation of child advocates.

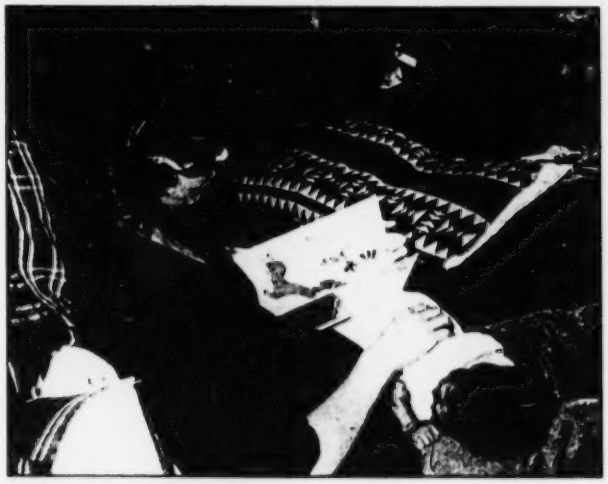
combine high level leadership, integrated program and community mobilization approaches, continued commitment to increased funding and a framework for state action. These states include: Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and West Virginia. While many states are making progress in developing comprehensive initiatives, between 1996 and 1998, no new states were added to this list.

- Seventeen states reported at least some level of comprehensive programs and community mobilization efforts. Alaska is among those 17 states. Within the last three years, Alaska has provided support for five communities through the COMPASS Community Grants program to implement community planning efforts that include the potential to focus on young children. The state currently provides some state support for preschool age children and state support for children age 0 to 6 and their families, principally through state funding for Head Start, Healthy Families and child care subsidies. Currently all of these programs have eligible children on wait lists for services.

The Map and Track studies are important because they illustrate that while many states are thinking about and even planning new initiatives, evidence of a change in the level of commitment or implementation of programs for young children and families over the last three years is not readily apparent. In the meantime, thousands of children have been born and celebrated the passing of the critical first three years of their life.

Alaska seems to be following this trend. During the 1998 legislative year, the Governor proposed a plan to protect children against the devastating effects of child abuse and neglect. The plan, *Smart Start*, called for a combination of child protection and prevention initiatives. These iniatives were:

1. The plan proposed to take advantage of new federal legislation that allows states to use a combination of federal and state funds to expand health care coverage for low-income families who make too much money to qualify for Medicaid health coverage and not enough money to purchase private health insurance.
2. *Smart Start* proposed to strengthen the State's child protection systems through a combination of laws and funding for child protection programs such as law enforcement personnel, foster parent programs, and social workers.
3. The third piece was the prevention component. The plan proposed to strengthen and expand successful programs for young children and their families like Head Start, Child Care Assistance, preschools, child immunization, Infant Learning Programs and Public Health Nursing resources.



Jessie, age 3 weeks, and mom . . . it is never too early to begin language and literacy development.

Legislators approved the Medicaid expansion measure, after an unsuccessful attempt by some members to delete prenatal care from the initiative. State funds allocated for this piece of *Smart Start* will ensure coverage to 11,000 uninsured children and 800 pregnant women who make less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level - about half of the estimated 23,500 Alaska children who are currently uninsured.

Lawmakers approved funding for 65 percent of the governor's $14 million request for improved child-protective services. Funding will cover additional troopers, child protection workers, pay increases for foster families, support for subsidized adoptions of children with special needs, fifty additional juvenile-detention beds statewide, and salary increases for Village Public Safety Officers. Some changes to the state's child protection laws were passed by the legislature: creation of a Child Fatality Review Team, establishing a multi-agency approach to investigating reports of child abuse and neglect, granting more authority to foster parents by allowing them to be heard at all hearings regarding the welfare of a child in their care and requiring the state to provide foster parents with complete background information on children placed in their care, clarifing responsibilities of social workers and court proceedings, setting up guidelines for child visitation, child health and safety, and family preservation, and setting up timely rehabilitation services for parents to prevent removal of children from their homes.

Lawmakers agreed to fund only 38 percent of the governor's $11-million budget request to expand proven primary and secondary prevention programs. Increased funding will go to: reduce waiting list for services for developmentally disabled children, Infant Learning Programs, child care for welfare-to-work recipients, unwed pregnancy programs, and public health nursing. **Important primary and secondary prevention programs that did not receive funding or legislative action include: expansion of Head Start, increases in day care assistance programs, preschool certification and quality review, comprehensive integrated mental health planning.** Programs that did not receive full funding requests include: Healthy Families continuation funds, COMPASS community planning programs, tobacco use prevention, childhood immunization initiative, reduction of underage drinking program.

Alaska's *Smart Start* plan clearly illustrates the dilemma that many states are facing . . the urgent need to rescue children already in abusive and neglect environments, provide a safety net for children at-risk, and at the same time, invest funds in prevention programs. In the end, our largest investment was made in the treatment of problems and not in their prevention.

Translating what we know, what we have learned and what we are capable of doing into public policy and daily practice is one of the hardest parts of any new

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Early Years, *continued*

endeavor. There are no quick fixes or magic solutions to the complicated problems children and families encounter. Providing support and resources for families is often labor-intensive, expensive and requires care and knowledge. Developing explicit plans and strategies is not just the responsibility of state leaders, but requires energy and commitment from the members of every community and every family. Creating solid foundations for children and families begins much like the development of a child, unfolding from the first simple connections. To that end, following are suggestions for actions steps that can be taken:

- Like the rescuer in the river story, the first step is the realization that children are in trouble. We can begin only if we are willing to take the initiative to move up around the bend and figure out who or what is causing the problems.
- The second step is to explore the current information and research about children and families. How do programs and services measure up to the current body of research on brain development and the studies on the effectiveness of early childhood prevention programs. Included in this task is the need to have data about the current status of child well-being and the programs and supports available to them. For example how many children in a specific state or community are at risk for prenatal exposure to alcohol and resulting fetal alcohol syndrome. What programs are currently available to end this 100% preventable birth defect?
- A critical step is to have the vision and the commitment to move forward. Without high level leadership and the commitment of policy makers both at the state and local level, significant change for struggling children and families will not happen.
- Along with the commitment, must come the willingness to re-allocate priorities and resources - both human and financial. Supporting children and families, implementing comprehensive prevention efforts, and promoting the well-being of all children and families may mean other projects like new bridges and roads will have to take a place at the end of the line for a few years. In five years, a road will still be a road . . .in five years, a baby will be ready to enter public school.
- The last step is the big one - it means that ideas, plans, funds and personnel must now be committed into action. Consistent evaluation must be available to make sure that the desired outcomes are being met and necessary adjustments made to reach program goals.

The opportunity to take each of these five steps is right outside the door. Today, we have at our fingertips more information than ever before about the growth and development of children during their most critical years - ages 0 to 3, and what it takes to support their healthy growth and development. This September, Alaskans will have the opportunity to learn about the latest research in child development, to examine our public policies and current practices in relation to that research, and to help identify strategies that can be used to support the development of children in the critical years and beyond. This opportunity begins with a statewide conference, The Early Years, The Critical Years to be held in Anchorage on September 23 - 25, 1998. In this issue of Alaska's Children, you will find a schedule of events and other information about The Early Years, Critical Years Conference. Join in - take the first steps.

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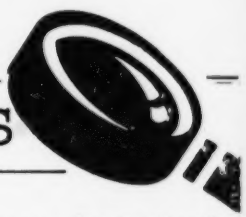
sources: *Investing in Our Children: What We Know and What We Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions.* RAND Research Study. Press Release, April 22, 1998. *Map and Track, 1998 Edition,* National Center for Children in Poverty. *Starting Out Right, Developmental Assets for Children,* Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota. *Alaska's Children,* Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project, Fall, 1995 and Spring, 1997. Zero to Three, Natinal Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, April/May 1998, Volume 18.

Calendar of Events



July 13-16 Arlington, VA	*National Indian Head Start Directors Conference: "Drum to the Rhythm of Change" .. A Call to Changing the Future*	Ramona Menish (360)384-2260
July 20-24 Green Bay Wisconsin	*18th Annual National Native American, Alaska NativeFirst Nations Cultural Curriculum Development Workshop*	Anita Chisolm (405)325-4127
August 6-8 Washington D.C	*The Transition of Children and Families from Head Start, to Public School Settings, Continuing the Momentum— NHSA Transition Conference*	JoAnn Nelson-Hooks (703)739-7555
August 25	*Alaska Statewide Primary Elections*	
September 21-22 Anchorage	*Alaska Head Start Association Annual Meeting and Pre-conference training*	Bonnie Headley (907)272-6925
September 23-25 Anchorage Sheraton Hotel	*The Early Years, The Critical Years Early Childhood Conference*	Bernie Blaine 279-7827 bernieb@ninestar.com
November 3	*Statewide General Elections*	
November 16-21 Cincinnati, OH	*12th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect*	Kim Amos (301)589-8243
November 18-21 Toronto, Canada	*NAEYC Annual Meeting*	

Alaska Head Start Association

NEWS

Association Board Meeting News. The Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA) held a two day Board meeting on June 4 and 5. Minutes of the meeting have been distributed to all members along with revisions to the current AHSA bylaws. Revisions to the bylaws require a two-thirds vote of the current membership in favor of the changes to become enacted. A voting card was included in your packet. Significant changes to the bylaws included:

- requiring the membership secretary and treasurer to be bonded
- reducing the existing six standing committees to four - the committees are Budget and Resources Committee, Advocacy/Networking Committee, Training Committee, Bylaws Committee.

The Board also discussed future AHSA events that all members should consider attending - a general membership meeting and State Head Start Conference. This year, both of these activities have been scheduled during the same week as the Early Years, Critical Years Conference, September 23-25 in Anchorage. The AHSA is one of the co-sponsors of this important statewide conference and planning other Head Start meetings during the conference will help more Head Start staff, parents and friends be able to participate in the conference. Head Start training Association meetings are being planned for the two days preceding the conference and would take place of a statewide Head Start Conference. The Head Start General Membership meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 22. The Board would like help in planning training sessions and the Membership meeting. Please contact Bonnie Headley at Prevention Associates and help plan this important event. An awards ceremony to recognize staff, parents and friends for their service to Head Start programs in Alaska will be held during these pre-conference days.

Other Important AHSA Business. The Association has extended the search for a logo for the AHSA. Please take some time to consider a symbol that will pay tribute to our children and families. The logo design must be black on white (81/2" x 11" and have a written explanation of the design. Send your ideas to Bonnie Powell, P.O.Box 3070, Homer, Alaska 99603 by September 10. The Association would also like all members to look through their collections of Head Start slides and photos. AHSA would like to build a photo collection to be used both as a visual history of Head Start in Alaska, but for newsletters and other media events. Photos can also be sent to Bonnie Powell.

STATUS REPORT

Alaska's Children

"A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please; but how they are carried out depends on her and him. They will assume control of your villages, states and nations. He/she is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations. All your books and papers are going to be judged, praised or condemned by them. The fate of humanity is in their hands."

Source: Abraham Lincoln

More than 80% of Head Start agencies with full-day programs rely on the Federal Social Services Block Grant funds to help pay for these full day services. This year these Block Grant funds have been targeted for significant cuts by Congress to help pay for the new 217 billion dollar federal highway bill.

Source: Report on Preschool Programs, Bi-weekly, Newsletter, July 8, 1998.

In many urban areas, the cost of sending a 4-year-old to a child care center is more than twice as much as tuition in the state's public universities.

Urban Area	In-state College Tuition	Child Care fee	Tuition Cost as Percentage of child care fee
Anchorage, AK	$2,552	$5,784	44%
Honolulu, Hawaii	2,298	6,188	37%
Seattle, WA	2,928	6,136	48%

Source: Child Care Challenges as reprinted in CDF Reports, June 1998

During FY 96, state funding subsidies for the University of Alaska were estimated to be $167 million. State child care subsidies for each of the last three years has not exceeded $7.2 million.

In the U.S. today, the number of school-age children left home alone each day after school is swiftly approaching five million. Less than half of the nation's schools have any type of after school care programs. Research indicates that children who are left alone after school are at greater risk of truancy, substance abuse, poor grades, stress and other risk-taking behaviors. In fact, juvenile crime peaks between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Source: CDF Reports, March 1998

The Early Years, The Critical Years

An Early Childhood Conference

September 23-25, Anchorage, Alaska

The Early Years, The Critical Years is a conference about Alaska's youngest citizens and their families. The conference will focus on the importance of the prenatal-to-age-three period of childhood. The conference features presentations by national experts in child development and neurobiology, work sessions that will examine policy implications of the current research, and training sessions for parents, public and private practitioners, policy makers, community members, employers, the business community, and others who care about Alaska's children and their families. The conference is a statewide effort that is being sponsored by the Education Commission of the States, The Knowles-Ulmer Children's Cabinet, the Head Start Quality Center for Training and Technical Assistance, the State of Alaska Departments of Education, Community and Regional Affairs, Health and Social Services, and the Alaska Head Start Association. Featured presenters for the conference include:

- **James L. McGaugh,** founding Director of the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory. Dr. McGaugh is a Research Professor of Psychobiology at the University of California Irvine. His major research interest is the role of stress-activated brain neuromdulatory systems in regulating memory storage. Dr. McGaugh received his PhD. from U.C. Berkeley and did postdoctoral research in neuropharmacology in Rome, Italy with Nobel Laureate Dr. Daniel Bovet before going to UCI in 1964 as the founding Chair of the Department of Psychobiology. At UCI he has also served as Dean of the School of Biological Sciences and Executive Vice Chancellor.

- **Ellen Galinsky**, President and Co-Founder of the Families and Work Institute, The institute is a non-profit national center for policy research on issues of the changing workforce and changing family lives. Ms Galinsky has served on the faculty of Bank Street College of Education where she helped to institute the field of work and family life and directed numerous studies of work and family life, stress and productivity. Galinsky, in conjunction with the National Governors Association and the National Center for Children in Poverty, is currently directing an effort to provide technical assistance to several states as they work to develop a comprehensive, integrated agenda for young children. She is also coordinating outreach activities for a public awareness campaign of what families and communities can do to promote their young children's healthy development and school readiness. Galinsky is a past President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the largest professional organization for early childhood educators. Ms. Galinsky received her B.A. from Vassar College, M.S. from Bank Street College and in May, 1966 received an honorary doctorate from Bank Street College.

- **Ron Lally,** Director of the Center for Child and Family Studies at WestEd, an education research and development laboratory in San Francisco. He received his PhD in Educational Psychology for the University of Florida and a post-doctoral certificate of Infant Testing from the Child Development Research Center in London. He has been a professor at Syracuse University and chair of its Department of Child and Family Studies. Dr. Lally has recently served on the Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers that wrote the framework for Early Head Start and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences Roundtable on Head Start Research. In 1995, the WestEd laboratory and Washington based Zero to Three were awarded the Early Head Start National Resource Center contract by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Through that contract they provide quality assurance, training and technical assistance to the newly created Early Head Start Program and its 143 sites throughout the nation. Dr. Lally's current research focuses on two topics: social-emotional development in infancy, and the impact of early intervention on adult functioning.

- **Dorothy Routh,** Executive Director, Center for Educational Enhancement and Development, Florida State University. For over a decade, Ms. Routh has developed and directed efforts to improve educational systems. She has served as a policy analyst for the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission; policy coordinator for the President Pro-Temp Office, Florida Senate; developed and directed the Office of Policy Research and Improvement for the Florida Department of Education, coordinated the Florida Education Summit and developed the Statewide Systematic Initiative to reform mathematics and science education for the National Science Foundation. She is currently serving as the Director of the Center for Educational Enhancement and Development, a small service-oriented organization at Florida State University and as Coordinator of Florida's *Starting Points* children's initiative.

- **Kadija Johnston,** Coordinator for the Infant-Parent Program operated by Daycare Consultants at San Francisco General Hospital. This program provides mental health services and consultations for child care programs. Her extensive experience includes serving as a consultant with Early Childhood Mental Health Program of Richmond, CA, head teacher of their therapeutic nursery, and working as an infant development specialist at the Center for the Vulnerable Child.

As of July 31, the conference schedule of events are as follows:

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

AM Session
Opening Session
Fran Ulmer, Lt. Governor, Alaska
Frank Newman, President, Education Commission of the States

What Should we Know About Brain Research Development? - James McGaugh

Why are These New Advances So Important:
Panel Discussion - Frank Newman, Panel Moderator

- What Are the Implications of Brain Research for Families, Child Care and Businesses - Ellen Galinsky
- What are the Implications of Brain Research for Child Abuse and Neglect and Child Development - Ron Lally
- What are the Implications of Brain Research for Improving Education Policy and Practice - Dorothy Routh

PM Session
A Call to Action - The Alaska Children's Cabinet
Implications of Brain Research and Policy Planning for Alaska Families, Programs and Services

Participant Working Groups to develop recommendations, action steps and/or strategies. Working Groups include:

- Early Education, Learning and Schooling - Facilitator: Shirley Holloway, Commissioner Department of Education
- Prevention and Health Care - Facilitator: Karen Perdue, Commissioner Department of Health and Social Services
- Quality Early Care and Development - Facilitator: Mike Irwin, Commissioner Department of Community and Regional Affairs
- Family, Community and Business Support - Facilitator: Margaret Pugh, Commissioner Department of Corrections
- Healthy and Safe Families - Facilitator, Ron Otte, Commissioner Department of Public Safety.

Presentation of Recommendations, Actions and Strategies from each group to all conference participants - Frank Newman.

Thursday, September 24, 1998

AM/PM Sessions
Principal Presentations:

- Ellen Galinsky - Ahead of the Curve: New Family Realities and the Business World Response
- Ran Lally - Infants Take Part of Us With Them; Providing Quality Infant Care
- Kadija Johnson - Promoting Mental Health in the First Years of Life
- Dorothy Routh - Translating Brain Research into Action, Training of Trainers
- Barbara Wallant - Personal Care
- Pat Frank/Cookie Rose/Liz Sunnyboy - Family Systems and Grief and Loss
- Maureen Harwood - Culturally Sensitive Home Visiting
- Barbara Wallant - Systems Care

Evening Session and Reception - open to the public
Principal Speaker - Ellen Galinsky

Friday, September 25, 1998

Workshop Sessions - AM

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects - Patti Bruce
- Reality of Infant Toddler Child Care - Leslie Mayer
- Support Parents of Infants/Toddlers with Disabilities - Ginger Fink/Leslie Munson/ Mary Lou Hansen
- Strengthening Families Through Home-Based Support - Julie Wild-Curry
- Parents & Families as First Educators - Paula Pawlowski
- Strengthening Our Efforts by Working Together - Paula McMeen
- Starting Off on the Right Foot - Commissioner Shirley Holloway
- Teen Parents-Promoting Stronger Bonding with Infants - Nancy Cavanaugh
- Facilitating Attachment - Verna Loosli/ Jeanne Wheeler
- Implications of Brain Research for Early Childhood Educators - Steffen Saifer
- Ways of Knowing: Family Visiting with Alaska Native Families - Jacqueline Tagabon/Nila Rinehart
- Music on My Mind - Mary Foltz
- Medical Home - Beth Lauesen/Jackie Borges
- First Steps on the Road to Reading - Ardy Smith Miller

Poster Sessions - AM

- Healthy Families, Happy Futures - Jill Holdren/ Julie Wild-Curry
- A Career Development Systems, Alaska Partners Presentation - Mia Oxley
- Critical Issues in Child Care Seats - Gordon Glaser
- Passionate Partisan Participation - Ms Lare/Barb Dubovich

Workshop Sessions - PM

- Promoting Parent-Child Relationships through Home Visiting - Darlene Skoglund/Sharolyn Lange/Elaine Miller
- Inclusive Child Care for Infants and Toddlers - Polly Taylor-Magnenat/Sheri Baxter
- Meaningful Environments for Young Children - Eileen Hughes
- The Art of Home Visiting - Maureen Harwood
- Know Your Baby - Carol Brice

In addition to these scheduled events, the Alaska Head Start Association has also planned two pre-conference days of training and meetings for Head Start parents, staff and friends The entire week promises to be an important opportunity for all Alaskans to learn about the current findings about child development, to help develop a long range plan for our children and families, and to learn how each individual can become part of the future for our children.

Registration for the Early Years, Critical Years Conference is open at this time. Conference fees are $85.00 prior to September 1 and $110.00 after September 1. Credit for the Conference is available through the University of Alaska Anchorage. Participants can register for credit through UAA or at the conference. Please contact Nine Star Conference Registrar (907)279-7827 or e-mail at bernieb@ninestar.com for registration forms.

Heirloom Birth Certificate. A collaborative effort between the Alaska Children's Trust and the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics brings a very special opportunity to Alaskans - the opportunity to celebrate the birth of a child and to contribute to the Alaska Children's Trust, which provides grants to Alaska communities for prevention of child abuse and neglect. Beginning July 1, 1998 the State of Alaska Heirloom Birth Certificate is available for purchase by family or friends for anyone born in Alaska. The birth certificate features the artwork *The Embrace* by Rie Munoz which poignantly depicts a parent's love. Each 9-by-12 certificate is embossed with the child's name, date and place of birth, and the name(s) and birthplace of the parent(s). The certificates are available at a cost of $35 and proceeds from the sales of the certificates is deposited directly into the Children's Trust Account. The Heirloom Birth Certificates aren't just for newborns. Friends and family members can celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, retirements and other special occasions by purchasing a certificate. Order forms can be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Heirloom Birth Certificate Program, Alaska Department of Health/Social Services, P.O. Box 110675, Jueanu, AK 99811-0675 or calling (907)465-3392.

Alaska Children's Trust Grant Awards. The Alaska Children's Trust Board of Trustees awarded grants to 15 communities throughout Alaska in June. Each of these grants are community driven prevention programs to address child abuse and neglect. This is the second year funds have been made available to communities from the interest generated from the Alaska Children's Trust Fund account. The Children's Trust Grant Award Committee reviewed 53 eligible grants. Following are brief descriptions of each of these grant awards.

Big Dipper Community Circle - Media Outreach for Parent Education, Kotzebue. This project will provide parenting education, information about child abuse and neglect issues, information about services for families in the area, links to parent involvement with school and other family-centered activities for rural Alaskans through radio and printed materials. Project activities will be harmonious with the predominant Inupiat Eskimo culture of the region. The project will serve the Northwest Arctic Borough and Point Hope. Staff and volunteers of KOTZ radio, the primary source of news and information for this area, will coordinate a interactive radio show and media program. A toll-free telephone line will enable listeners to participate in the discussion of issues concerning children and families throughout the area. Vital information will also be presented in regional newsletters and newspapers.

Boys and Girls Club of the Kenai Peninsula - Prevention Project, Central Kenai Peninsula and Seldovia. The request for a second year of funding was awarded to the Club to enable them to continue their successful program and expand their activities into Seldovia. The Club and community professionals and volunteers will continue to provide violence prevention training and education for youth, coaches and parents. The project will serve youth who are members of the club as well as at-risk youth referred by the alternative high school. Training will be provided to all staff and 150 volunteer coaches in violence prevention skills. The project will also serve 1,480 youth in the Central Peninsula area who participate in athletic leagues. The primary goal of the project is to continue to curb youth and family violence and promote awareness of the causes and solutions of violent behaviors.

Covenant House Alaska - Project Nuture, Anchorage. A second year of funding was also awarded to Passage House, a residential facility for single pregnant and parenting mothers ages 16 to 20. Since 1993 graduates of this program have consistently demonstrated the long-term benefits of this environment through decreased rates of seconu pregnancies, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect; and increased rates of employment and independence from public assistance. The continuation of this grant will maintain contact with graduates at 1, 3, 6 and 12 month intervals following discharge from Passage House. Staff will make home visits to graduates at regular intervals or as needed, and will provide support, services, education and training for these young families.

Eastern Aleutian Tribes Inc. - Community Parenting Project, Sand Point . The primary goal of this project is to provide parenting classes and a support network to parents and families of the Eastern Aleutian region. The project will focus on families with children under the age of three. Services will supplement existing services in the area through the addition of parenting classes, support groups and home visits. The goals are to decrease the number of non-emergency calls to clinics, decrease child accident emergencies, promote healthy infants

and children, and increase community based parenting support and resources.

Fairbanks Resource Agency - Supported Parenting, Fairbanks. The project will provide services for parents with developmental and learning disabilities. Services will include parent education, support, home-based services and parenting intervention to keep children safe and healthy. This project will provide unduplicated services to the Fairbanks area by helping parents gain the self-esteem, communication skills, and parenting education.

Gulkana Village Council - Summer Family Education Project, Gulkana. Through a combination of a summer academic program and a field setting for traditional cultural experiences, this project has multiple goals: create a positive academic experience for village children that will build on past successes and assure a head start for the next school year, provide children with the opportunity to spend time with the Village Traditional Chief and the elders who are all positive role models, increase opportunities for positive father-child communication, and create an opportunity for a home assessment of family needs for participants in the program.

Homer Children's Services - Infant Learning/Parents as Teachers, Homer. As it currently exists this program is an early childhood family education and support program providing information and support to families of children age 0 to 3, with developmental delays. With project funding from the Trust, these successful home-based services will be extended to all families regardless of delay, primarily in the home, but with a center based play group. Goals for the project are to support a higher level of parenting and nurturing skills among all family members, a better understanding of their child's development and better use of community resources.

KYUK/ARCS - "Issues and Answers for Parents" and Teen Talk," Bethel. This grant will allow the continuation of a successful weekly morning call-in radio show, "Issues and Answers," and a weekly evening call in show for children and young adults, "Teen Talk." The shows features invited guests from agencies and individuals who work with families, parents or children and an opportunity for listeners from the Bethel area to discusses concerns. "Teen Talk," is produced by young volunteers and primarily addresses adolescent issues. These two programs have provided an important link for families and children to receive information on a wide variety of issues in a geographic region that is diverse and isolated from many traditional forms of services.

Native Village of Eklutna - Dzuugge'Ghak'ae Program (Favorite Children's Place), Anchorage. This program will work with Native single parents between the ages of 16 to 30 who are at risk for encountering problems that may lead to an unhealthy home environment for their young children. The program proposes to target those parents who may have moved from rural isolated areas into the Anchorage area, leaving behind their traditional village and family support systems. The program will promote families helping other families, traditional parenting skills, group activities, links to community supports, education and training opportunities.

Native Village of Wales - Kingikmiut Dance Project, Wales. The Village proposes to re-introduce and teach youth and interested residents traditional songs and dances, traditional hunting skills, and engage youth in community discussion groups. Through these traditional methods of teaching and learning, the project will provide village youth with the opportunity to learn responsibility, self-discipline and respect and to discuss child abuse, neglect and other village issues.

Northeast Community Center - Fresh Start, Anchorage/Muldoon. This project will provide life skills training, social skills training, and vocational assistance to at-risk youth and single parents. The Center will also offer parenting classes for families and host a series of community meetings on the issues of child abuse and neglect. The services for the children will be provided on a daily basis in real-life environments while the services for parents will be provided on a weekly basis in a classroom setting. The program anticipates serving over 100 parents and 500 children during the year.

The Resource Center for Parents and Children, Parent Outreach Project II, Fairbanks. A second year of funding will allow this project to continue providing information and training for Parent Outreach workers in neighborhoods and villages in the northern region. Goals of this project are to positively influence families, raise community awareness, change attitudes about child abuse and neglect and its prevention.

Tundra Women's Coalition - Personal Safety Specialist, Bethel. This award will provide funds for a specialist to focus on sexual abuse prevention education in elementary schools. A comprehensive plan for utilizing this Specialist includes: in-service workshops for all preschool and elementary school staff on child abuse and neglect, parent education evenings, ongoing prevention education for children, and a community awareness media campaign.

Volunteers of America, Alaska - The Strengthening of Grandfamilies Project, Anchorage. This project will provide services to families parented by grandparents. The services will include respite care through summer prevention camp for 12 young children, a winter family camp for grandparented families, materials and training for the No Empty Nest support group. The project proposes to strengthen resources of grandparented families through a multi-faceted approach in which respite care is provided, children and grandparents are engaged in meaningful activities and support is provided to grandparents who face unique parenting issues.

Wrangell Community Services - Parent Education and Support Services, Wrangell. This project will establish parent education classes and parent support services for parents of all age children and adolescents. Three levels of service will be available: informational material designed for parents to work on at home without formal assistance, parent education classes, ongoing parent support as needed.

Alaska's Children

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project
Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs
P.O. Box 112100
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2100

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COLLABORATION B·R·I·E·F·I·N·G·S

Head Start Quality Improvement Project - Focus on Rural/Remote Regions.

The American Indian Programs Branch (AIPB) has recently contracted with Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. to provide assistance in developing a strategic plan for improving Head Start Services in Alaska and other rural/remote areas of the United States. This is a multi-faceted project that includes identification, review and highlighting of issues affecting service provision in Alaska. The findings from this research effort will be followed by convening study and work groups to hear issues that must be addressed to improve service delivery. Grantees and other experts on Early Childhood Development will be asked to explore solutions to the special problems of serving families that are living in remote regions of the state. Principal activities of this project include:

- A review of reports and legal issues affecting funding and service delivery in rural/remote areas.
- Convening a Regional Meeting of grantees and related experts in Alaska to gather input about the special needs and problems affecting remote regions of the state.
- Convening three work group meetings to develop collaborative strategies that can enhance and improve early childhood education and related services to families in these regions.

The project will bring together Head Start, social service, health and other related disciplines to create a strategic plan aimed at extending and enriching services for the most hard to reach families and children. AIPB, Region X Head Start, and the Alaska Head Start State Collaboration office, along with many affiliated and related agencies will be participating in the project.

The project is being conducted between October, 1997 and September, 1998. If you have questions about this project, or wish to offer your assistance or suggestions, please contact Jim Kennedy at (740)654-4097 or Email: JKennedy7@compuserve.com

Child Support Services

The Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) has been awarded a federal grant to conduct a collaboration project with state and local child care and Head Start Programs. The grant will enable CSED to offer a wide variety of child support materials and training to child care providers, Head Start staff and parents. The goal is to increase participation by parents in the child support enforcement system. Through this grant CSED hopes to increase child support collections and stimulate involvement of both parents in the support of their children.

The Juneau, Southeast Regional Office/ CSED, will be coordinating the grant project. Melinda Cormany has been hired as the project coordinator for the grant. Child care providers, Head Start staff and parents are encouraged to call Melinda, or Shirley Dean, Project Director at the CSED office to answer any questions.

Melinda will be traveling to many Southeast communities to provide training sessions to both providers, teachers and parents. She will also provide information on how to apply for CSED services, establish paternity, locate absent parent, establish orders, collection and distribution of payments, and how to modify an existing order. ALL child support services are free of charge.

Raising a child is a big responsibility. Children require lots of love, care, attention and money to live on. Every child has the legal right to receive the financial support of BOTH parents, even if the parents are separated, divorced or never married. CSED works with parents, courts, employers and many other agencies to ensure children receive the support they deserve.

Please call CSED at (907)465-5887 for more information, or stop by the office at 410 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 107 if you are in the Juneau area.

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project

Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs • Quarterly Report • Fall 1998

Alaska's Children

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When Literacy Begins

A simple definition of literacy is the ability to read and write. As with most simple definitions of complex subjects, this one does not begin to describe the complicated process we use to communicate our ideas, beliefs and experiences with others; and the skills and abilities we need to be a literate person. Literacy is not just the ability to code and decode printed material. Literacy, rather, is a complex process by which we develop oral language, make the transition from oral to written language by learning to connect printed symbols with the sounds of speech, understand the meaning of what is read and written, and use oral and written language to develop a way of thinking and communicating with others. Developing literacy is a gradual process that depends first, on the experiences a child receives in their home environment, later through a child's experiences outside the home, and then through formal education and training experiences.

Most of our public attention has been focused on the formal education and training experiences that children need to become literate and achieve academic success. The United States today has a comprehensive public education system that guarantees every child a free and appropriate education. We have developed educational standards that specifically address our expectations, budgeted state and federal funds for public education needs, and developed complicated programs and initiatives to achieve educational goals. Yet, despite our sustained efforts, about 20 to 25 percent of U.S. children do not achieve a standard of literacy that we expect. Consequently we are always re-thinking what public education should be doing, and mak-

Please turn to next page

The Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
For more information, contact the Alaska Head Start Office at (907) 465-4860.
Project Director–Marilyn Webb; Newsletter Editor–Dorothy Douglas

Literacy begins, *continued*

ing new demands on our educational systems. For example, recent legislation trends have been to pass bills or laws requiring "English Only" be used in print or taught in schools; or that back-to-basic curriculums like phonics instructions be required in schools in an effort to raise student scores in reading and writing. Focusing all of our attention on single strategies in the public education system to produce a literate society, however, ignores a big piece of how an individual becomes literate and the factors that influence the development of literacy. Literacy does not begin when a child enters a public school. Literacy, quite simply, begins at the beginning.

Setting the Foundation for Literacy

Soon after birth, a baby will begin to tune into the sounds of their environment, the voice of their parents, music from a radio, stories read aloud from a book. At first these sounds are meaningless, just a jumble of sound vibrations. During the next year, the human brain will organize these sounds into the patterns and rhythm of language that are the foundations of literacy. Understanding how the brain grows and develops, is key to understanding how literacy develops: from the simple to the complex, from receiving the right experiences and stimulus at the right time, and from providing the right kinds of supports to help children become literate.

At birth, the brain is remarkably unfinished - only those parts of the brain that are necessary for survival are functioning. The brain is able to regulate heart rate, breathing, body temperature, and reflexes. A baby is able to see, hear and smell - but only dimly. During the next three years, the brain will grow and develop at an astounding rate. By age 3, roughly 85% of the brain's core brain structures will be organized and by age 10, the root neurological structures for all future functioning will be established. Before birth, our genetic code controls brain growth and development. After birth, a child's daily experiences and their environment interact with their genetic endowment to stimulate brain growth and development. Genes may open doors, but daily experiences enable a child to walk across the threshold.

The brain is made up of about 100 billion neurons, nerve cells that are the basic building blocks of the brain. Neurons are long wiry cells that carry electrical messages through the nervous system and brain. Every neuron has an axon - an "output" fiber that sends impulses, and dendrites - short hairlike "input" fibers that receive impulses. The neuron axon and dendrites are connected by synapses - the "plug" that allows impulses to flow between neurons. This elaborate network is sometimes referred to as the brain's wiring or circuitry.

Brain growth and development begins soon after conception when the neurons begin to form and assemble themselves. At birth, the 100 billion neurons are connected by only about 50 trillion synapses. Not nearly enough to complete all of the circuits that are required for all the complex tasks the brain must do. Soon after birth, the brain begins to form the trillions more connections between neurons that will be needed to completed brain growth and development. By the time a child is three years old the number of synapses in the human brain will increase from 50 to 1,000 trillion. In this way, a child's brain becomes super dense and will remain that way throughout the first 10 years of life. After this, there is a gradual decline in synapse density and by the time a child reaches adolescence, half of all the synapses in the brain will have been discarded, leaving about 500 trillion. The experiences a child receives from their immediate environment stimulate brain growth and development, hard wiring them in the brain's permanent neural circuits. Those synapses that have been magically transformed by experience are preserved, and the synapses that were seldom or never used will be eliminated leaving behind a brain whose patterns of thought, emotion or behavior are, for better or worse, unique.

> Focusing all of our attention on single strategies in the public education system to produce a literate society, however, ignores a big piece of how an individual becomes literate and the factors that influence the development of literacy.

Shortly after birth, when a newborn begins to hear the first sounds from their environment, neurons in the auditory cortex- that part of the brain that controls language- begins to organize and develop

Before There are Words There are Sounds.

Any source of sound sends vibrations or sound waves into the air. These funnel through the outer ear (the part you can see), into the ear canal, down the ear, striking the eardrum, causing it to vibrate. The vibrations are then passed to the middle ear. Small bones of the middle ear transmit the sound vibrations to the hearing nerve in the inner ear. The vibrations become nerve impulses and go directly to the brain, which interprets the impulses as sound (music, voices, etc.). In reality, the ear does not "hear," the brain does. For the brain to be able to process and interpret sound vibrations, the synapses that complete the nerve cell circuits between the ear and the part of the brain that controls hearing, the auditory cortex, must be formed.

The first step toward literacy happens when the brain builds circuits for the phonemic structure of language. Each of the world's 6,000 languages uses a different assortment of phonemes, distinctive sounds that build words. When a child hears a phoneme over and over, neurons are stimulated to form into a cluster. This cluster of neurons is dedicated to "hearing" that single phoneme. In this way, an auditory map begins to develop in the child's brain, with clusters developing for each separate phoneme specific to their home language. At the age of 6 months, infants from English speaking homes will have different auditory maps than infants in Yupik speaking homes. By the age of 12 months, a baby will have already lost the ability to discriminate sounds not significant in their home language. As the language centers of the brain continue to organize and develop, a child will acquire increasingly complex skills.

Emerging Literacy

Research shows that learning about language - listening, speaking, reading and writing is a gradual, on-going process that takes place over time. This theory - emerging literacy - views oral language, reading and writing as interconnected parts of literacy development. Each of these language skills supports

the other.

Oral language includes both receptive and expressive language skills. Receptive language is the information a person acquires by hearing sounds, words and seeing non-verbal language signs like facial expressions. Expressive language involves the messages sent from one person to another, like crying, talking, tone of voice, gestures and expression. Expressive language also includes formal systems of sign language, Braille and other assistive devices.

Developmental milestones for both receptive and exptessive oral language include:

From birth to 3 months

- develop phoneme awareness
- listen and respond to sounds and voices
- coo, gurgle and interact with caregivers
- enjoy listening to adults read, sing, etc.

From 3 to 8 months

- understand nonverbal cues such as smiles, tone
- gurgle, growl, squeal to themselves
- respond to simple, familiar requests like their names
- begin babbling at six months
- learn and recognize syllables
- repeat consonants and vowel sounds
- produce all the sounds found in their home language

From 8 to 13 months

- understand that their sounds and actions cause others to respond
- begin connecting syllables into words
- learning that words have meaning by naming objects - Mom, cup, toes, nose

From 12 to 18 months

- acquire new words at an astounding rate - one new word every two hours
- use the same word to mean different things by varying their tone of voice and using gestures

From 18 to 24 months

- make up new words to name objects
- string words together and use two word sentences
- use negatives
- understand and respond to many words, simple directions and questions
- take turns during brief conversations with adults
- imitate words and gestures they hear and see

From 24 and 36 months

- build simple sentences into more complex sentence structure - "no nap" may become, "I don't want nap."
- begin using prepositions (in, on), different forms of verbs, plurals (add "s" to words), pronouns (me, she), articles (the, a), conjunctions (and)
- understand and use concept words such as in/out, over/under
- tell stories, use language in creative ways, express feelings

From 3 to 4 years

- speak in complex sentences
- continue to learn and apply rules of grammar
- ask and answer simple questions
- use language to think, learn, play with others
- use language to make plans, describe experiences, invent dramatic play
- talk about things and people not present
- imagine what might happen in the future, recall past events and experiences

From 4 to 5 years

- master many rules of grammar
- converse in long, complex sentences
- tell long stories and real or imaginary experiences
- enjoy word play and silly words
- understand and talk about concepts such as tallest/smallest
- understand and answer complex questions.

Reading with children is not only fun, it is fundamental for building literacy. — Metlakatla Head Start

Words Into Print

At the same time children are becoming fluent speakers and listeners of their home language, they are also acquiring the foundations necessary for transferring oral language into reading and writing. The early stages of written language development are all about making discoveries and developing pre-reading and pre-writing skills. These early developmental milestones include:

Beginning at about 3 months

- listen and pay attention to an adult who reads or sings to them
- explore soft vinyl or cloth books with the senses - grasping and putting it in their mouths

At 6 months

- listen closely to nursery rhymes and songs, pay more attention when an adult reads

Around the age of 8 months to 1 year

- turn the pages of a book
- realize that objects in a book are the same as those in their own world
- grasp a crayon and discover it will make marks on paper and sometimes a wall

By 18 months

- show a definite interest in books may pick up a book and bring to an adult to read
- "early scribbling" enjoy holding a crayon and moving it across paper

Please turn to next page

Literacy begins, *continued*

make marks with more control

From 24 to 36 months

- "controlled scribbling" explore techniques, color, ways to use different tools, scribble in lines circles, zigzags
- name objects in books
- follow a simple plot in a story book and join in when being read to.

Between the age of 3 and 5 years, children begin to discover "real" concepts about written language, they:

- begin to recognize letters of the alphabet
- learn to tell the difference between one letter and another
- reproduce letters in drawings and art
- string letters together and understand that letters make up words
- learn that words have meaning

Children are now ready to make a very important discovery about language - that in addition to meaning, letters and letter combinations also carry sound. This ability to integrate oral language (sounds) with written language (print) is critical if children are to become competent readers and writers. It is one of best predictors of success in becoming literate.

Language, Literacy and Light Bulbs

As children discover more about written language, they begin to use what they know about sounds and what they know about print to "read and write." But they are like young inventors and their creations do not look or sound like a finished product. They may use techniques such as invented spelling, a system that works well for the child, but is not as popular with some adults. Parents may see these early attempts at writing (using "bk" for "bike") as an indication that their child will never learn how to spell. But at this stage of emerging literacy, children do not yet understand all the rules of grammar and are not ready to use more conventional forms of writing. Over time, children will discover more about written language and use these discoveries to become "better spellers." Forcing children to use the rules of language before they understand the concepts, interrupts the logical progression of language from the simple to the complex. Teachers and parents can support children through this phase in developmentally appropriate ways.

Supporting Emerging Literacy

During the first 5 years of life, children need to develop a strong foundation in oral and written language for a lifetime of learning. Language is a process that will develop naturally if a child receives the right information and experiences at the right time. A child's early experiences at home, in other settings like child care, preschool, and Head Start, have a direct influence on his or her learning about oral and written language.

Among the most important activities parents and other adults can do with children is to read aloud to them. Research supports the idea that a daily reading routine with children, starting as early as 3 months, helps children learn that written language is important and that it has meaning.

Parents and others, are natural providers of oral and written language experiences. When a parent holds a newborn close and talks to them, they are stimulating the neurons to form the phonemic bundles that are necessary for speech. Babies learn syllables, words and grammar through a universal language that all parents in all cultures seem naturally motivated to use. This universal language has been labeled "Parentese." For many years, we have believed this need to talk "baby talk" to infants was unnecessary and, at times, irritating. But now, linguists believe that many of the features of Parentese actually promote learning oral language. The higher pitch captures a child's attention; speaking slowly and exaggerating syllables and words makes it easier for children to recognize and learn them; short, simple sentences help the child understand grammar; repeating a child's first words promotes word/object recognition.

Parentese can help a child in the early stages of language development. But, as children grow, they need more than baby talk to support emerging literacy. Parents and other adults can help a child learn language anytime, anywhere - at the grocery store, making breakfast, exploring the beach, telling stories. Adults can support literacy development by using simple strategies such as:

parallel talk - talking about what the child is doing and naming the objects he or she is playing with;

labeling - giving the names of objects, actions and feelings, talking about what is going on and the things being used;

problem solving - defining a problem or a task, thinking of ways to solve it, trying out the solutions and picking the best answer;

open-ended statements and questions - asking questions or phrasing statements so a child will use more than one or two words to respond;

expansion - helping a child hear the right way to say words and learning new words by repeating what a child is saying and adding more words to what was said.

Every time a parent or other caregiver interacts with a child, they are helping to build language and literacy skills. The more words a child hears, the more words they will acquire. But, language doesn't just happen because of conversation with adults. As children become more active and curious, they need other experiences with language. Exposure to music, dance, songs, poetry, art, dramatic and pretend play, provide a simulating and rich environment for children to practice and learn language skills. Through their pretend play, children explore ideas and learn to communicate with other children. Art, music, and dance provide a whole world of possibilities for children to try out language. Pictures are often accompanied by wonderful stories and ideas; simple children's songs expand vocabulary and bring new dimensions into their world.

Among the most important activities parents and other adults can do with children is to read aloud to them. Research supports the idea that a daily reading routine with children, starting as early as 3 months, helps children

learn that written language is important and that it has meaning. Through repeated exposure to print, children become familiar with letter shapes and differences, letter-sound recognition, word concepts, and rules of spelling and grammar.

Another important job for parents is to help children discover that print is talk written down. Supplying a variety of crayon, paper and encouraging children to scribble begins their discoveries about written language. As their scribbles become more controlled and print symbols begin to appear in their drawings, parents can take dictation - that is, write down the stories that are represented in their drawings. Writing down the stories about adventures, either real or imagined, that children experience every day is another tool parents can use to build written language skills.

Emerging literacy also needs to be supported outside the home. Almost 50% of children spend all or part of their day in out-of-home care. Quality early care environments are essential for supporting literacy. The most effective home or center based child care programs, preschools, Head Start, or other early childhood programs are those:

- with staff who are trained in early childhood development, and have practical knowledge about emerging literacy;
- where frequent, high-quality conversations occur between children and adults;
- where activities are carefully planned that expose children to dramatic play, art, music, poetry, and games that help to increase vocabulary and language fluency;
- where children are exposed to printed materials when adults frequently read to children, help children to write down stories, identify labels and signs, and practice pre-writing skills;
- where teachers and staff respect the child's home language and cultural traditions.

Literacy Delays

When children do not receive the right experiences at the right time, especially in the first three years, they may have oral and written language delays later in life. The most common reasons children experience delays are:

- hearing impairments;
- home environments where parents or caregivers lack resources, education, and training to promote language and literacy development;
- lack of understanding and respect for home cultural and language experiences and activities;
- disabilities that affect a child's potential to acquire literacy skills.

Conversations with kids builds language learning. Attorney General Bruce Bothello and future lawyers from Metlakatla Head Start.

Hearing Impairments

Establishing early auditory brain circuits and other neural circuits are critical for later language development. But if children cannot hear, they cannot develop speech and the entire progression of language development is interrupted. Every year in the United States, 24,000 children are born with mild to profound hearing impairments, and another two children for every 1,000, will acquire deafness in early childhood as a result of injury or illness. Without normal hearing, the child's receptive and expressive language skills will typically be absent, delayed or otherwise poorly established. Neuroscientists are, in fact, beginning to discover some astounding links between early language learning and some disorders like autism, dyslexia, and language based learning disabilities.

Neuroscientists now believe that the inability to hear the sounds of human speech properly may contribute to autism. The smallest muscles in the human body are those in the middle ear that allow the ear to filter sounds. In autistic children, this muscle is lazy and children cannot hear the pitch of the human voice. Instead they tune into the sounds that are much lower: the rumble of traffic, the growl of a vacuum cleaner - noises that signal danger to the developing emotional circuits. As a result, autistic children feel too anxious to interact emotionally and the neural system controlling emotional responses fails to develop. Autistic children gradually retreat into a world where they have no emotional connections to other people or the world around them.

Language based learning disabilities (LLD) affects 7 million children in the United States. Children with LLD have trouble learning to read and write and many never develop more than basic literacy skills. Research indicates that children are not able to distinguish short, staccato sounds such as a "d" and "b." It takes about .015 seconds for the auditory cortex to respond to a signal, calm down and get ready to respond to the next signal. In LLD children, it takes 5 to 10 times as long and the brain never hears certain sounds. The short sounds go by too quickly to process and the brain never learns to recognize them. Consequently the brain cannot make the connection between the sounds and printed letters - a complicated, but critical step that is necessary for children to learn to read and write.

Scientists are also exploring the theory that a major problem for dyslexic children may lie not with reading, but with listening to speech. Dyslexic children may not be able to detect the fine timing differences in sound

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Literacy begins, *continued*
waves that make sounds like "pa" different from "ba." As a result, neurons in the language areas of the brain are in misplaced bundles and the sequence of language development is interrupted. Dyslexic children experience considerable delays in the development of reading, writing and learning.

For children who are at risk for disabilities due to hearing impairments, early detection and early intervention is critical. If hearing impairments can be identified at birth or within the first three months, and if children can be fitted with appropriate hearing devices or other interventions, risks for language delays can be greatly reduced. It is also possible that early detection and intervention can reduced the risks for other disabilities. For example, the effects of autism were greatly reduced in a study group of young children who listened to tones and songs altered by computer to filter out low sounds, forcing the brain to focus on human speech. Scientists also believe it may be possible to develop early interventions for other hearing related problems, like LLD and dyslexia, that would stimulate and strengthen the neural circuits to recognize sounds that are being missed.

Unfortunately, most hearing impairments are not discovered as early as they could be and quite often not until language delays have already been observed. Generally only children who are at risk for hearing impairments are tested as newborns because testing was complicated and costly. However, only 50% of children with hearing impairments fall into risk categories. Recently a simple, inexpensive test to detect hearing impairments in newborns has been developed which has prompted eighteen states to pass laws requiring universal testing of newborns.

The relationship between hearing impairments and literacy delays is readily acknowledged. But the relationship between language delays and home environments where children cannot get the early language and literacy experiences they need, or whose language experiences are different because of cultural differences, is still questioned by many people.

Poverty

The effects of poverty can be passed from generation to generation. Adults who were raised in poverty and not exposed to literacy building experiences, generally had unsuccessful school experiences. They may be undereducated, lack information about child development, and how to support early learning. If parents have low reading skills, or cannot afford books, a daily reading routine with their child will be difficult. If they have had unfortunate school experiences, they may not be able to encourage or support their own children to succeed in school. Poverty also means that children and families often cannot get adequate health care or have poor access to health care systems. Children with chronic ear infections are often from low-income homes and do not receive adequate medical care or screening to detect hearing problems. Poverty creates a struggle to provide food and safe homes on limited budgets. Parents are often under so much stress that reading to a child every day is beyond their limited energy. Poverty also means that parents cannot afford quality child care and preschools - out-of-home environments that are also essential for developing literacy. If families who live in poverty do not receive appropriate interventions, children are at very high risk of oral and written language delays.

Trenton, age 13 months, shows a definite interest in books with familiar topics.

Abuse and Neglect

Children who live in violent homes, are physically or emotionally abused, or suffer extreme neglect early in life, are often at risk for language delays. Instead of tuning in to the soothing sounds of a loving voice, children are paying attention to the signals that represent danger and harm: angry voices, physical punishment. As a result the brain falls behind in development and has trouble assimilating complex information such as language.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences and limited English skills are often identified as risk factors for children as they move from their home environment into child care, preschools and public school. Children are often labeled as language delayed and thought to have had limited language experiences in the home. However, when viewed from an emerging literacy perspective, and not a public school literacy perspective, children with non-English language experiences or different cultural backgrounds, are competent users of language. All children acquire the skills they need to get their needs met in a clear and efficient manner within their home environment. Home language success, however, does not always translate into "school language" success.

School language assumes that all children should learn oral language through frequent conversations between an adult and child, question/answer exchanges, and exposure to written language building activities. The home language experiences of many children, however, may be very different. But, this does not mean their home language experiences were not rich and supportive. For example, traditional ways of teaching children in many Native homes follows their strong oral language culture. Children learn by watching and listening to stories, songs and traditional dance. As Elders tell stories, children learn by memorizing and remembering the lessons of

those stories. A great deal of information is gathered through non-linguistic cues of gestures, facial expressions, and intonation. Large chunks of knowledge are shared between adults and children where elaborate explanations are not necessary. Children learn by observing and doing. Many learning experiences do not come from books, but from the environment in which the child lives - fishing, subsistence food gathering and preparation, and celebrations that honor those traditional experiences.

If schools do not recognize the diverse experiences that have influenced children's emerging literacy and build on those experiences, the transition from the home language to the school language will be difficult. Children will be learning unfamiliar topics, assigned unfamiliar tasks, and subjected to unfamiliar teaching methods like question and answer exchanges.

Children with different cultural backgrounds may also have limited English proficiency if their home language is something other than English. Because English is the language of schools in the United States, having limited English skills is viewed as a risk for becoming literate. But being bilingual at a young age does not mean children will not learn to read and write. In fact, developing fluency in a second language is easier before the age of ten, when the language centers of the brain are still growing and developing. Most schools in the U.S. do not offer instruction in a second language at the elementary school level; but wait until high school to offer foreign language classes, long after the optimum time for learning a second language has passed. In elementary school, the approach seems to be to assist children in giving up their home language in favor of English. A second language is a risk factor only if school systems are not prepared to educate bilingual students during the elementary school years. To become literate in a second language, children must first develop competency in their home language, including learning how to speak, read and write. If children attend schools that have strong bilingual programs, they can develop a high standard of literacy in English.

Preventing Literacy Delays

The reasons for literacy delays are often complex and involve more than one risk factor. The most effective way to prevent literacy delays is to develop comprehensive programs that help families and children overcome the complex problems they face. Following are some examples of successful comprehensive programs:

Calendar of Events

November	*Native American Heritage Month*	
November 1	*National Family Literacy Day*	
November 11	*National Young Reader Day*	
November 19 Anchorage, AK	*Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Summit '98*	L Diane Worley 1-800-478-2072 DHSS
November 16-21 Cincinnati, OH	*12th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect*	Kim Amos 301-589-8242
November 18-21 Washington, D.C.	*National Association for Education of Young Children Annual Meeting*	202-232-8777
December 2-4 Anchorage, AK	*Alaska Health Summit '98 - Growing Up Healthy in Alaska*	Ak. Public Health
December 3-5 Washington, D.C.	*0 to 3, 13th Annual National Training Institute*	202-638-1144
December 9 Chicago, Ill	*Together We Can - Head Start Child Care, Special Education Partnership Day*	410-269-6801
December 10-15	*15th Annual National Head Start Association Parent Training Conference*	703-739-0825
December 11	*Alaska Head Start Association Teleconference*	1-800-315-6338 3272#
January 6-8 Washington, D.C.	*Head Start Collaboration Network Meeting*	
January 6-11	*National Head Start Association State Presidents and Board Meeting*	
January 15	*Alaska Head Start Association Teleconference*	1-800-315-6338 3272#
February 1-5 Washington, D.C.	*Annual Training Conference for Head Start Directors*	
February 15-19 Juneau	*Alaska Head Start Week and Association Meeting*	

Even Start is a nationwide program established to help break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and illiteracy. Even Start has developed program standards that integrate the principals of early childhood development, adult literacy programs and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. Through Even Start, federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education are distributed through a grant process to establish community based projects that help parents gain the literacy and parenting skills they need to support their children's education. There are currently four Even Start projects in Alaska serving 73 families and their children, ages birth through seventeen years. These projects are: Kenai Peninsula Even Start, Anchorage

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Literacy begins, *continued*

Bilingual education helps to bridge the gap between home language and school language cultures . . . English is introduced into the curriculum, only after children have developed a firm foundation in their home language. Children who are enrolled in this program, score 40% higher on standardized tests than those who were not enrolled in the program.

Family Literacy Program, Sitka Even Start, and the Gruening Park Even Start Learning Center in Juneau.

Bilingual education helps to bridge the gap between home language and school language cultures. One of the model bilingual programs in Alaska is the Yupik language immersion program in the Lower-Kuskokwim school district. In the early elementary grades, Yupik rather than English is the school language. Children learn to speak, read and write in Yupik. English is introduced into the curriculum, only after children have developed a firm foundation in their home language. Children who are enrolled in this program, score 40% higher on standardized tests than those who were not enrolled in the program.

Building on the successes and experiences of this and other bilingual programs, the Tlingit and Haida Head Start program in Juneau, has introduced a Tlingit language program for children ages 3 and 4. Children enrolled in the program are receiving language and learning experiences from teachers who are fluent Tlingit speakers, as well as all comprehensive services available through regular Head Start programs. Parents of the children are also attending a Tlingit language class one day a week. The program is a collaboration between the Sealaska Heritage Foundation, Head Start and the Johnson O'Malley Program. Using the resources and expertise available through this collaboration, books and other printed materials using the Tlingit language are being developed to supplement this oral language program.

Head Start is a statewide program that is committed to supporting emerging literacy through comprehensive programs that:

- build on the home language and learning experiences of each child,
- provide health screenings and health care referrals to identify risks and provide appropriate treatment;
- extend education and training opportunities for parents in their own literacy development, parenting skills, and child development;

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National Indian Head Start Directors Association

In October, Nila Rinehart, Director for Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska Head Start Programs, was appointed as President of the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA). The NIHSDA is an Association of Head Start Directors who work with tribal grantees funded through the American Indian Programs Branch of the Head Start Bureau. The goals of the Association are:

- To be a voice for American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start programs and the families they serve.
- To foster networking and information sharing opportunities among programs.
- To provide a forum where Head Start Directors, Tribal Leaders, and Parents can discuss issues of importance to American Indian and Alaskan Native children and families.
- To gather and disseminate information pertinent to American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start Programs.
- To recognize excellence.
- To establish collaborative partnerships with agencies and associations who share a similar philosophy.
- To educate others about American Indian and Alaskan Native culture and the unique relationship which exists between tribes and the federal government.
- To support new Directors of AIPB funded programs.
- To listen to the NIHSDA membership and work to address their needs.

Anyone is interested in the activities of the NIHSDA can contact Nila at 1-907-586-1432.

Alaska Head Start Association

NEWS

Looking Ahead.

At the October 8-9 AHSA Board meeting, members re-affirmed goals for the Association. These goals are:

One-Year Goals.

- AHSA agendas to include updates from KIDPAC and One Voice
- Continue to establish statewide partnerships which benefit families
- Continue to develop clear communication links between affiliates, grantees, regional offices, Collaboration project, QIC state office, committees and advocacy groups. Links should include Website and articles in Alaska's Children.
- Submit a FY 00 Head Start expansion plan to the Governor
- Revise and distribute AHSA Handbook to all Board members and Affiliate/ committee Chairpersons
- Develop a visibility and proactive plan for the Association to include membership flyers, booths at conferences, slides and pictures
- Advocate for continuation of the Children's Cabinet and funding initiatives that focus on promotion and prevention
- Develop an identifiable AHSA logo/ symbol to go on all information.
- Develop and distribute advocacy packets for members within each grantee
- Submit FY 00 Head Start expansion plan to the legislature and a request recognizing Alaska Head Start Week 2/15/98
- Increase member participation of each affiliate by 10%
- Develop Financial Procedure plan and have a fiscal audit
- Become a 501(c)3 organization
- Develop a financial plan to include broadening our financial base and fundraising efforts
- Encourage every grantee to send one person from each affiliate to Juneau meeting
- Sponsor a statewide Head Start conference
- Help re-fund Collaboration Grant, act as Advisory Committee to State Collaboration Grant on an ongoing basis
- Increase membership to 350 and have 100% of grantees paid members
- Become NHSA affiliate
- Advocate for continuation and implementation of Alaska Workgroup Strategic Planning
- Establish AHSA Historian and begin AHSA archives, scrapbook, and format for ongoing recording of the Association
- Begin to research AHSA video production
- Develop and implement training for all AHSA/State/National recognition of excellence in Alaska's Head Start programs
- Establish Region X Head Start Conference Committee to determine logistics and budget and clear role of AHSA in the 2000 conference in Anchorage

Alaska Head Start Association Board Members. — Homer, Alaska, October 9, 1998

Five-Year Goals adopted by the AHSA Board are:

- Well-oiled advocacy network for Alaska's children and families
- Head Start continues leadership role in all levels of government and family services statewide
- Ensure all families with children ages birth to five who are eligible are being served - have a process in place with a plan being followed
- Research and plan a video on how to advocate for children and families
- Have a Financial plan in place to help fulfill our goals of advocating and receiving grants. Remain viable without the Collaboration Grant.

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News, *continued*

Financial Plan to include paid AHSA employee. The organization will be well-established and functioning from a permanent home including archives and history.

- Develop Quality Standards for ALL children and families
- Plan and develop a video about AHSA for PR/education purposes
- Broaden membership base to involve people from all areas and connections
- Host the Region X Head Start Conference in Alaska
- Adapt and adopt Family Services Advocate Credentialing Program in Alaska

Affiliate and Committee Updates.

Staff Affiliate. 1/3 of Alaska grantees were on line! Homer has 100% staff involvement. Two staff from Region X are interested in a seat on the board, they will mail out ballots for Region X. Region XI will meet again next month, November 17, @2:00 pm via teleconference to fill their board seat. Access meeting by dialing 1-800-315-6338, 3272#. Staff are concerned about fair wages. They would also like to see an AHSA web page.

Parent Affiliate. Met and drafted a letter to Parent Involvement Coordinators along with a letter to parents asking them to join and participate in the election teleconference. Election teleconference is October 29 A 12:00 noon. To access this call, dial 1-800-315-6338, 3272#.

Director Affiliate. Shirley Pitz is the new Region X rep. Bonnie Powell will server another term, as will Sarah and Pam. Mary Ellen will be the NHSDA rep. next year. Met with Carol Waters as part of their on-going leadership training.

Friends Affiliate. Drafted and mailed a letter to go out to all friends. Goal is to increase membership to 100 members. The election teleconference is October 27 @ 12:00 noon. Two seats open and they are planning to elect alternates too. Teleconference # 1-800-315-6338, 3272#.

Networking/Advocacy Committee. The logo entry submitted by Crystal McNeill was accepted. The design will be sent to a graphic artist to develop, hopefully at no charge to the Association. Contact Bonnie Powell if you know someone willing to donate their talents.

STATUS REPORT

Alaska's Children

In the United States today 4 out of every 10 fourth graders cannot read proficiently.

source: National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

Children from low-income families have a vocabulary of 5,000 fewer words than children from middle-income homes. By age 17, the gap grows to 20,000 words.

source: County News, National Association of Counties, Washington D.C, 1997

Between September 16 and October 27, 1998, 27 cases of measles have been confirmed in Alaska. Confirmed cases ranged in age from 10 to 32 with the median age 15. On September 24, the Alaska State Department of Health and Social Services issued an order requiring all children enrolled in Alaska schools to have 2 doses of measles vaccine.

source: State of Alaska, DHSS, Section of Epidemiology

If students were distributed evenly across the nation's pubic school classrooms, every class of 36 students would include 10 students from ethnic or racial minority groups. Of these 10 students: nearly all would be from low-income homes, 6 would be from homes where English is not the home language, 2-4 would have limited English proficiency, 2 would be from immigrant families.

source: National Center for Cultural Diversity and Second anguage Learning. University of California, Santa Cruz, 1996.

AHSA General Membership Meeting.

Over 100 people attended the meeting on September 21, 1998. 96 members joined AHSA for the 1999 year and $1,325 was collected in membership fees. Motions passed at the meeting included changing membership dues to $250 annually for Grantees funded for 50 or less children. The change is effectively immediately and new grantees will be contacted and invited to join. Special recognition was given to Sharon Trish for her 18 years of commitment and support of Alaska Head Start programs.

National Head Start Association.

Expansion and appropriation money for FY 99 is scheduled to be disbursed at 60% to quality and 40% expansion. Collaboration process has changed for each state to include more coordination and include AHSA representation and Head Start personnel in unified planning for early care and education at the state and local level.

Expansion Proposal

Directors met and developed a survey for directors. This will give AHSA an idea of what the needs are of each grantee.

Fiscal Procedures

Procedures have been drafted and will be sent out for review and revision. Members are asked to pay special attention to fundraising section as it is not fully developed.

Conference 2000

Captain Cook has been booked for the conference which will be in February 2000. Committee members are: Bonny Headley, Yvonne LaChar, Laurel Young, Nancy Hanigan, Susan Cocklin. Laurel proposed planning timeline for the conference as a guide for our schedule. A theme also needs to be chosen.

Alaska Work Group. Members are creating a strategic plan that will include a report of issues and concerns regarding the State of Alaska in six different categories. The Plan will develop positive outcomes with the hope of creating a hopeful vision. Another hope is that all grantees will take an active role in carrying out the plan. The work groups is looking at successful models that can be replicated.

Alaska Head Start Day

February 15-19, 1999 has been chosen as Head Start Week and a proclamation form the Governor and Resolution/Citation from the Legislature will be requested. This could be combined with our request for expansion funds. Sharon Trish will follow-up with this.

Census 2000

Every 10 years in the U.S. census information is collected as mandated by the U.S. constitution. Low income people, people without permanent residences, and minorities are historically undercounted in these 10 year census. It is especially important that they do get counted because the census helps determine and maintain equal representation (state and federal) and equitable distribution of resources. Alaska is being treated differently in rural areas due to break-up and information will be collect in January rather than April. Tony Vaska is working for the Census Bureau as a Community Specialist. Each community will form a committee to ensure forms are returned. The census bureau will be hiring census takers at a local level.

AHSA Meeting Dates and Times

- December 11 @ 12:00 noon via teleconference
- January 15 @ 12:00 noon via teleconference
- February 15-19 in Juneau
- June 10-12 in Dillingham
- October 6-8 in Anchorage (tentative)

AHSA minutes submitted by Anna Franks, Recording Secretary

Heirloom Birth Certificate for anyone born in Alaska

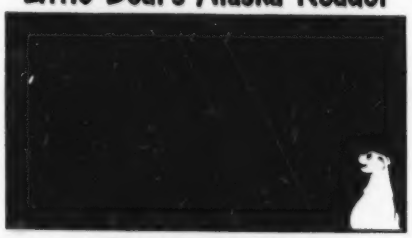
Heirloom Birth Certificate

Heirloom Birth Certificates, featuring the work of artist Rie Munoz, are now available to anyone born in Alaska. Each 9 by 12 inch certificate includes the child's name, date and place of birth, and the name(s) of the parent(s).

The $35 certificate, an ideal gift for relatives or friends, was created jointly by the Alaska Children's Trust and the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. Proceeds will go to the Trust, which provides community grants for programs aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect.

To obtain the heirloom Birth Certificates call Bureau of Vital Statistics at (907) 465-3392.

Little Bear's Alaska Reader



An ABC Book To Benefit the Alaska Children's Trust

The Children's Trust also has a children's book, *Little Bear's Alaska Reader*, available for purchase.

The book is filled with photographs from some of Alaska's finest photographers. From Nome to Ketchikan, kids will find pictures and verse that they are familiar with.

To order, contact 1 800 643 KIDS(5437) or **F.A.C.T.** P.O. Box 92155 Anchorage, AK 99509.

Alaska's
Children

Alaska Head Start State Collaboration Project
Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs
P.O. Box 112100
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2100

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Literacy Begins, *continued*

- train teachers and staff in early childhood development and emerging literacy concepts
- plan activities for children in both home and center-based programs that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and that support their individual literacy accomplishments;
- support other programs and develop resources in Head Start communities that provide services to families;
- work with state, federal, and private organizations to support the emerging literacy of all children in Alaska.

During the 1997-98 program year, there are 3,177 children and their families in 94 communities receiving Head Start Services - only 22% of the children in the state who are eligible for services.

Learning to Read and Write

By the time children are ready to enter public school, most are ready to begin more formal instruction in oral language, reading and writing. But children are unique. Each comes into kindergarten with different levels of understanding, experiences and emerging literacy skills. By building upon their individual experiences and skills, schools will help children continue to explore, discover and understand literacy. The goal is to help children learn to read and write - and then use reading and writing to learn.

Information sources: *Emerging Literacy: Linking Social Competence to Learning, Training Guides for the Head Start Community; Head Start Performance Standards; Helping Your Child Learn Language, Alaska Resource Access Project; Literacy Skills of American Indian Children: Home-Language vs. School-Language Literacy, Journal of Navajo Education; Issues in Cross-Cultural Assessment: American Indian and Alaska Native Students, Far West Laboratories; Alaska Native Home Based Preschool Education Project, Tlingit and Haida Head Start; Succeeding at Reading: Literacy in the Early Years, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory; Learning to Read and Write, NAEYC Position Statement; Your Child Learns to Read and Write, Margorie V. Fields; Your Child From Birth to Three, Newsweek; Rethinking the Brain - New Insights Into Early Development, Rima Shore.*